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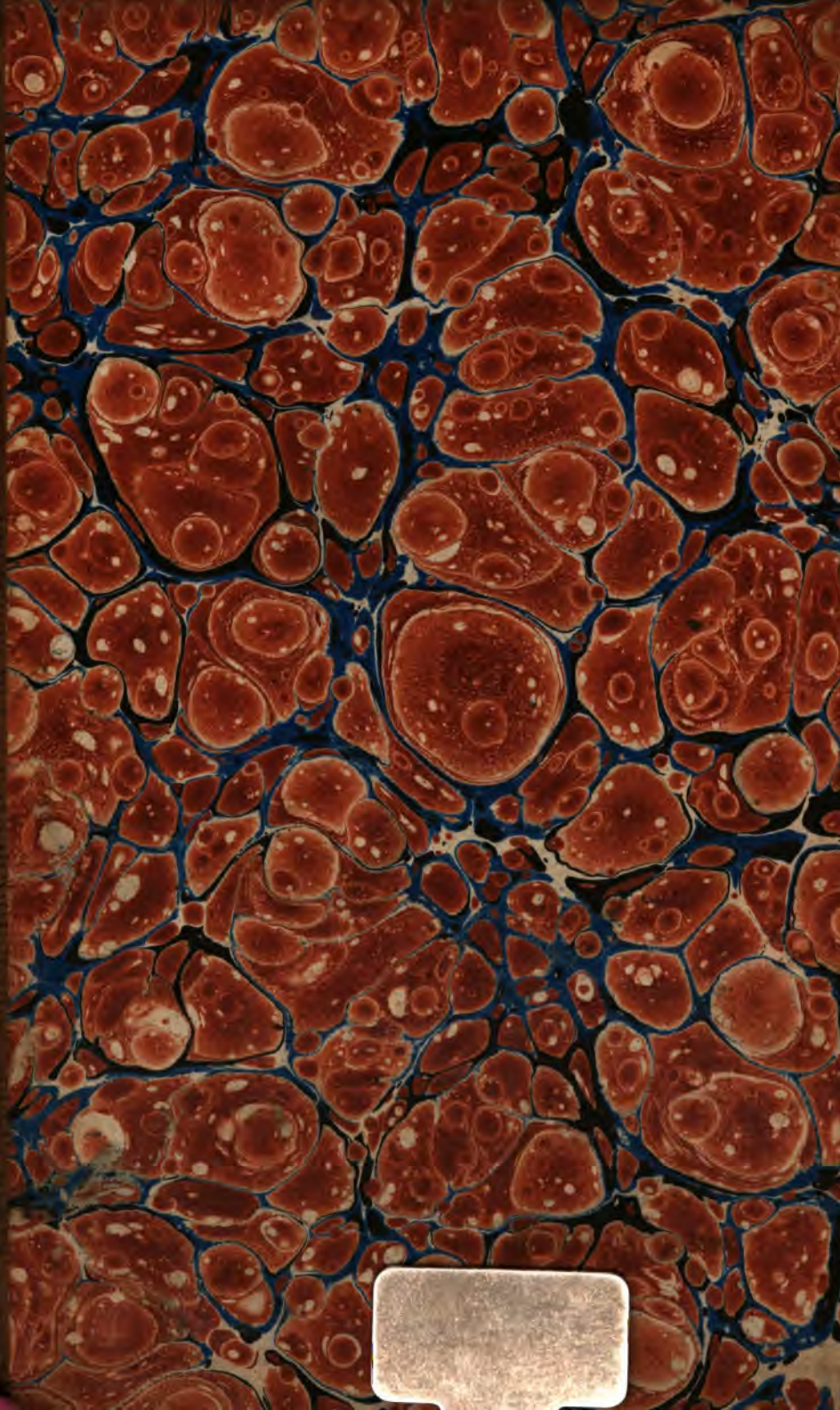
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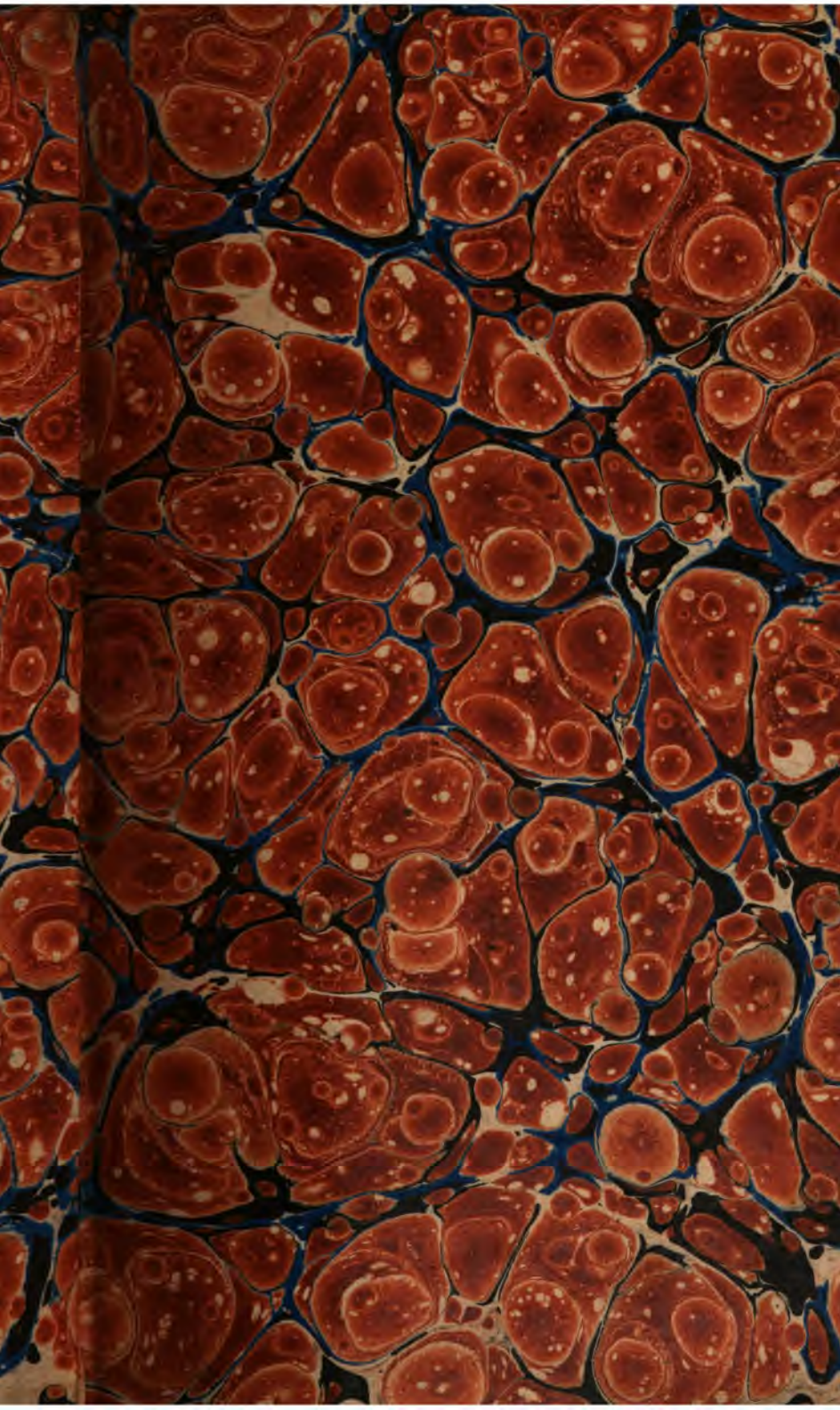
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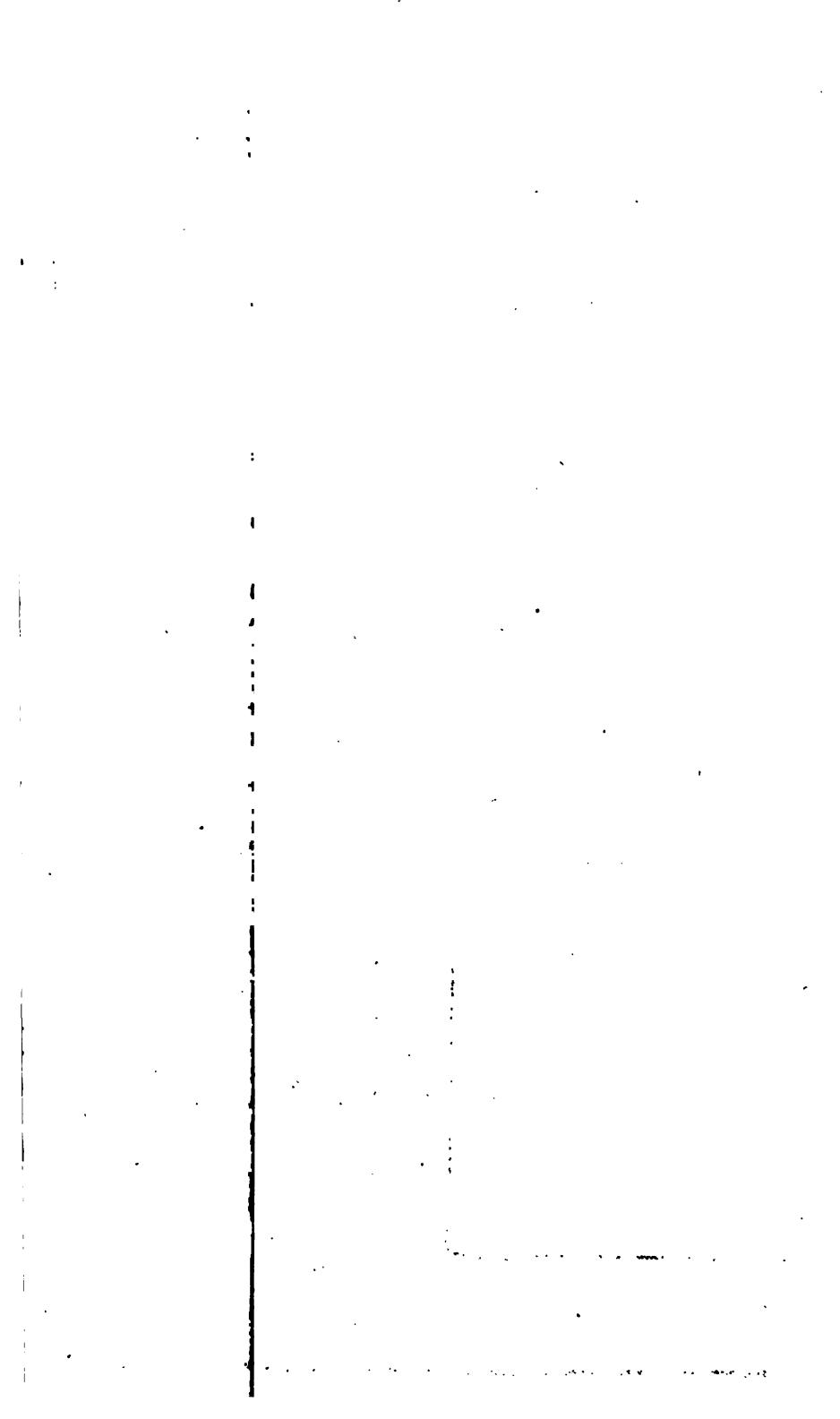




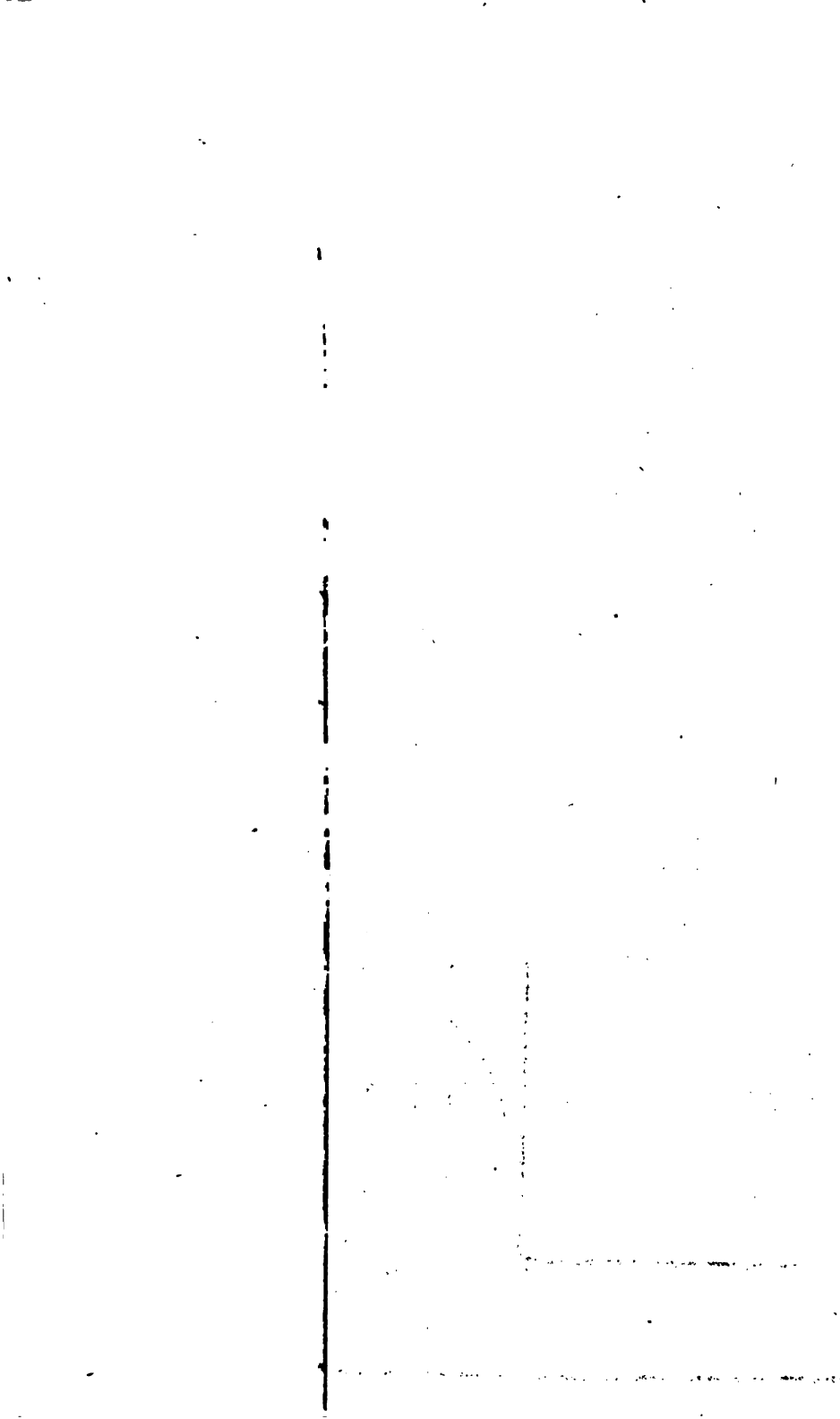


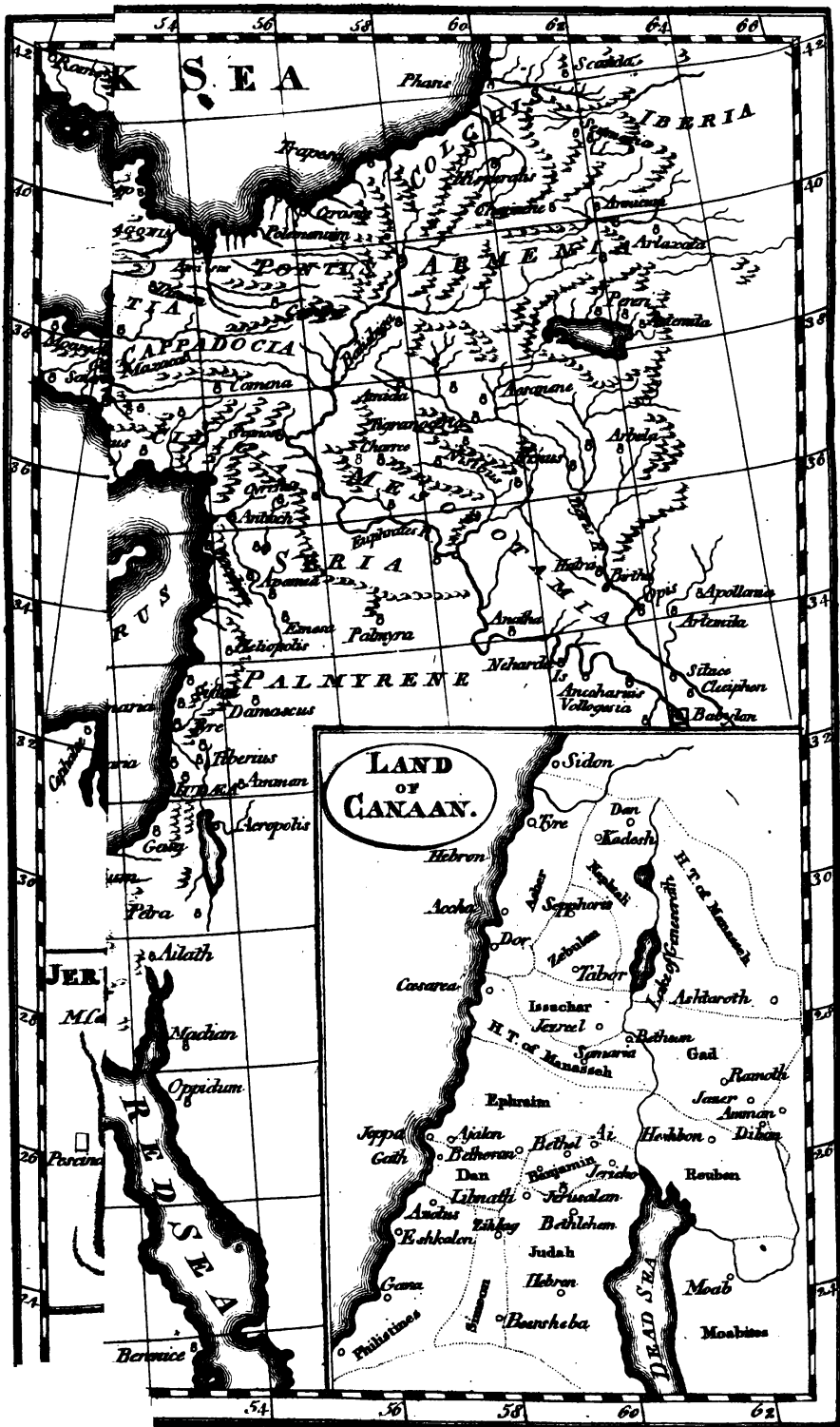












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THE
SACRED INTERPRETER,
OR A
PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION
TOWARDS A
BENEFICIAL READING
AND A
THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

CONTAINING,

- I. A faithful History of the four ancient Monarchies, the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, absolutely necessary for the knowledge of the condition of the Jewish people.
II. A general View of the State of the Jewish Church, to the Destruction of Jerusalem.
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The several parts of the Holy Land are compared with the accounts given thereof by modern Travellers. The whole designed to render the study of the Holy Scriptures more easy and instructive.

BY DAVID COLLYER,
LATE VICAR OF GREAT COXWELL, BERKS.

A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED.

VOL. II.

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY W. BAXTER;

FOR LAW and WHITTAKER; F.C. and J. RIVINGTON; LONGMAN,
HURST, REES, ORME, and BROWN; R. BALDWIN;
T. HAMILTON; and R. PRIESTLEY, London.

1815.



THE SACRED INTERPRETER.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the New Testament in general.

THE books of the New Testament were written by the Apostles, and other inspired persons ; who were stirred up, directed, and assisted by the Spirit of God so to write, as a means to preserve the doctrine of the Gospel to the world's end. Christ often promised to the Apostles the Holy Ghost for their guide, and this promise he performed^a, when *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost* ; of which he had told them, this was to be one effect^b, *He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* Again^c, *He shall guide you into all truth.* And not only the Apostles, but many of them also who were afterwards converted, were *filled with the Holy Ghost*. And if they had this assistance and guidance of the Holy Spirit as to what they said, much more as to what they wrote ; for their words were spoken to few, and might be forgotten, but their writings are for the use of all Christians, and still remain : so that they both taught the people then living, and wrote

^a Acts ii. 4.

^b John xiv. 26.

^c John xvi. 13.

for the instruction of the church in after-ages, by the special providence of God, and the assistance of the divine Spirit; which both *refreshed their memories*, as to what they had *seen and heard*^d, and *revealed*, or suggested what they knew not before^e.

And though St. Paul was not among them when the Holy Spirit was sent down at first, yet, at his conversion, he was *filled with the Holy Ghost*^f; and besides, he was caught up into heaven, and had *abundance of revelations*^g. As to what he says^h, *To the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord*; this is not to be understood as if what the Apostle spake or wrote was according to his natural reason, not of divine inspiration; but when he says, *I command, yet not I*, (or, according to the original, *Command not I*,) *but the Lord*; he might mean, that not only he so directed, but also it was founded on what Christ himself, whilst on the earth, taught against divorcesⁱ. *So to the rest speak I, not the Lord*; that is, thus I give my advice, not as a commandment of the Lord, or, although there is not any former express Scripture or revelation of Christ concerning the marriage of a believer with an infidel,

CHAP. II.

Concerning the Four Gospels.

THE first of these books are the holy Gospels. The word *Gospel* is derived from the Saxon *Godspel*, which signifies a good word, or good tidings; because the Gospels contain the account of our Lord Jesus Christ's coming into the world to save mankind from eternal wrath and misery in hell, and to

^d 1 John i. 3. ^e Ephes. iii. 3, 5. ^f Acts ix. 17. 1 Cor. xiv. 37. ^g 2 Cor. xii. 4, 7. see also 1 Cor. xi. 23. and xiv. 37.
^h 1 Cor. vii. 10. ⁱ Matt. xix. 9.

make them capable of enjoying everlasting happiness in heaven. The writers of the Gospel are called *Evangelists*, that is, they who 'give us the account of those good tidings. There are four of these Gospels called, according to the names of the writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew and John were two of Christ's disciples and apostles. Mark was a convert^k to the Christian faith, and a constant attendant of St. Peter the Apostle^l. Luke was also a convert to Christianity, and a companion of St. Paul^m.

There might be indeed other Christian writers, that were not apostles, besides Mark and Luke, who lived in the Apostles' times; and yet their writings do not make a part of the Scriptures, as the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke do, because these wereⁿ owned and approved by the Apostle St. John, and so received into the canon of Scripture: and however we may suppose that some of the Apostles, whilst they planted the Gospel in remote parts, might at first, for a present occasion, write more books or gospels than are now extant, (which yet cannot be known;) yet it would not follow, but that those we now have are sufficient to instruct us in all points of Christian faith and practice: for all the Apostles and holy writers were taught by the same Master, Christ, and all enlightened by the same Holy Spirit; and St. John, in the same place where he acknowledges that he had omitted the relation of many things which Jesus did, intimates, that what he wrote was sufficient to salvation; for that he had written the things contained in his Gospel, that men *might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through him*, or

^k Euseb. Hist. book ii. chap. 15. Gr. c. 14. ^l 1 Pet. v. 13.

^m Acts xvi. 10. ⁿ Euseb. ibid. book iii. chap. 24. Gr. c. 24.

αληθειαν αυτοις επιμαρτυρησαντα.

be saved^o. Lastly, the same good Providence, which, as is now supposed, might take care for the writing of more books, when more might be necessary, has likewise taken care for the preservation of so many of those books as are now sufficient.

Furthermore, concerning the Evangelists, it appears from the ancients, that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel about eight, or between that and thirteen years after Christ's ascension^p, to correct some mistakes, and to supply the defects that were in those accounts, which the first Christians, who were Jewish converts, received concerning the doctrine, life, and death of Christ^q. Some few years afterwards St. Mark's Gospel was written, according to what St. Peter taught, at the request of the Christians at Rome^r, and was perused and ratified by St. Peter. It hath been supposed, that St. Mark's Gospel was for the most part an abridgment, or short account^s, of what is contained in St. Matthew; but by comparing them it appears^t, that Mark doth not always observe the same order which is in St. Matthew; and that he gives a larger account in some particulars than Matthew doth, and that in some points of great moment, of which there are no footsteps in the other. Soon after the publishing of St. Mark's Gospel, St. Luke wrote to correct some mistaken accounts which were published of Christ's life and death amongst the Christians at Alexandria in Egypt^u.

^o John xx. 30, 31. and xxi. 25. ^p Dr. Mill's Prolegom. p. 7, supposes it later, viz. in the year of Christ 61. But see Dr. Cave on St. Matthew, ex Epiphani. Hæres. 51. and Dr. Wells's preface to St. Matthew. ^q Dr. Mill's Prolegom. p. 7, 8.

Whether it was at first written in Hebrew, the reader may consult Dr. Mill's Prolegom. p. 8. and Cave on St. Matthew for the affirmative, and Hottinger's Thesaurus, l. ii. cap. 1. §. 5. for the negative. ^r Irenæus, l. iii. c. 1. Dr. Cave on St. Mark, and Euseb. l. ii. c. 15.

^s Dr. Mill, ibid. p. 12. and Dr. Wells's preface to St. Mark. ^t Euseb. l. ii. c. 15. Dr. Mill, ibid. p. 12, 13. and Dr. Wells, ibid.

^u Dr. Mill's Prolegom. p. 13. and Du Pin's Canon, vol. ii. chap. ii. §. 5.

He has also mentioned what is omitted in the two former Evangelists, such as the conception and birth of John the Baptist, and of Christ himself; the presentation of Christ in the temple; his going up to the passover at twelve years of age, and in other instances. St. John^x, who outlived all the rest of the Apostles, and resided at Ephesus, having read the other Gospels, and approved them, made sundry additions of what was wanting, at the request of the Asian bishops, especially concerning the divine nature of Christ, affirming that he was God, in opposition to some heretical deceivers of that age. It is affirmed that this Gospel of St. John was written by him in Asia, when he was very old, at least three-score years after Christ's ascension^y.

These four Gospels, thus confirmed (as well as one of them wrote) by St. John, whilst he was living, were received as the entire canon (or catalogue of books) of the Gospel, by the primitive bishops and pastors of the church of Asia^z, where St. John resided; and afterwards from them by the Christians all the world over, as containing the Christian doctrine; and therefore, wherever the first successors of the Apostles afterwards planted any Christian church, they took care *to deliver to them these books of the divine Gospels*, as the ancient church historian observes^a. So that we have a plain and distinct account of the first writing, publishing, and receiving the authentic doctrine of our redemption by Christ, contained in the holy Gospels.

^x Euseb. Hist. book iii. chap. 1. Hieronym. Catalog. sub voce Johannes. Dr. Mill, *ibid.* p. 21, 22, 23. Du Pin, *ibid.* §. 6.

^y *Ibid.* ^z Dr. Mill, (ex Irenæo, l. iii. c. 11. fere ad finem) Prolegom. p. 23. See for the sense of the word *canon*, or *canonical*, part i. chap. 1. §. 8. ^a Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 37.

CHAP. III.

FOR the better understanding the holy Gospels, we may in the first place observe the following general remarks.

First remark. God was pleased to make several discoveries, from the beginning, of the Messiah, or his Son's appearance; which were still the more clear, the nearer the time approached, as it hath been briefly hinted in the first Part; and which, by the way, shew the nature of that faith which was required in the Messiah under the Old Testament; namely, according to the nature of the motives disposing one to have faith in him; that is, while they were darker, the faith was more confused; and more clear, as those became more particular and express. Immediately after the fall, it was promised that he should be born of the *seed* of the woman^b. Somewhat above two thousand years afterwards, God declared from what nation or people he should proceed, and take our nature, *viz.* from the offspring of Abraham^c. To Jacob (the grandchild of Abraham) it was revealed of what particular tribe he should come, *viz.* of *Judah*; and at what time, before the *sceptre*, or government, should *depart* from the Jews^d. After that, Moses speaks of him as a great *prophet* sent from God, and that all should hearken to him^e. Four hundred years after Moses, he is shewn not only to proceed from the tribe of Judah, but from what particular branch of that tribe, *viz.* the house of David^f. David also himself was inspired to set forth Christ more plainly, as to his death, by *piercing his hands and his feet*^g: his resurrection, that God would *not suffer his Holy One to see corruption*^h; his ascen-

^b Gen. iii. 15.^c Gen. xxii. 18,^d Gen. xlix. 10.^e Deut.

xviii. 15.

^f 2 Sam. vii. 16.^g Psal. xxii. 16.^h Psal.

xvi. 10.

sion into heavenⁱ, and sitting on the right-hand of God^k. Afterwards, other prophets foretold him more plainly; as Isaiah, that he should be born of a virgin^l, and suffer for us^m: Micah, that he should be born in Bethlehemⁿ: but Daniel fixed the time of his coming, viz. at the expiration of *seventy* (prophetical) weeks, or seventy times seven years; that is, four hundred and ninety years^o. Now, since all that was foretold (either in a plain literal, or figurative construction) concerning the Messiah, in all the different characters of him, (whether as a prophet, priest, or king,) was exactly fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in none else; it follows, that he was the Messiah which was to come into the world; and it is not unworthy of our observation, that the Jews themselves, though they refuse to acknowledge him, are yet the most zealous assertors of the authority of those very prophecies which bear witness of him.

Further, as Christ was foretold from time to time, so, the primitive fathers observe, divers eminent persons under the Old Testament dispensation represented him in several particulars; as Enoch and Elijah, in his being carried up to heaven; Noah, as a preacher of righteousness; Melchisedeck, as king of peace, and priest of the most high God; Abraham, as the father of the faithful; Isaac, as heir of the promise, and appointed for a sacrifice; Jacob, in wrestling with the angel, and prevailing, as Christ doth with his Father, by his intercession, (and his vision of the ladder, that reached up to heaven, prefigured Christ, by whom we may climb up into heaven also;) Joseph also represented Christ, in that he was sold into Egypt, and thrown into prison, but wonderfully advanced, and thereby made the instru-

ⁱ Psal. lxxviii. 18.^k Psal. cx. 1.^l Isaiah vii. 14.^m Chap. liii.ⁿ Micah v. 2.^o Dan. ix. 24, 25.

ment of preserving his family ; as Christ was sold and betrayed by Judas, cast into the prison of the grave, but miraculously raised up, to be a Saviour to his family the church ; Moses, as a prophet, a law-giver, and deliverer ; Joshua^p, as giving possession of the promised land ; Sampson, in overcoming the enemies of the church, and completing the victory by his death ; David, in being both a king and a prophet ; Solomon, as a man of peace, and in raising the temple of God, which was a figure of his church ; and, lastly, Jonah, in being three days and three nights in the whale's belly, thereby representing Christ's rising from the dead the third day : and however the lives of these persons were obnoxious to some stains and infirmities, yet that can no more hinder them from being representatives of Christ, than the spots on a picture hinder it from containing the delineation of the person for whom it was drawn.

It hath been remarked before, that all immediate revelation from God ceased after the return from the Babylonian captivity, and under the second temple, (except the Bath-Kol, or voice aforementioned, if that were so ;) but the time approaching for the appearance of the Messiah, God was pleased to revive his former way of revelation, by an angel to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Christ ; and also to the Virgin Mary^q.

Second remark. When the time was accomplished that Christ should appear, there was a common and earnest expectation^r among the Gentiles,

^p Joshua was a type or representation of Christ, in his name as well as office ; hence he is expressly called Jesus, Heb. iv. 8. scil. Jehoshua sive Joshua, et Jesus, a verbo Heb. Jashang.
^q Luke i. ^r Suetonius, l. ii. in Augusto, c. 94. Tacit. Hist. l. v. c. 13. Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. Et Suetonius, l. viii. in Vespasiano, c. 4. Percrebuerat oriente toto, vetus et constans opinio, esse in

as well as the Jews, through great part of the eastern country, of some great prince who should *arise out of Judea, and obtain the universal dominion*. Hence the wise men, or astronomers, among the Gentiles, who lived eastward from Judea, having most probably heard of such an expectation; and likewise observed a strange extraordinary star, concluded, according to the common notion ^a among the Gentiles, that it portended the birth of such a great king; and therefore they went to Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, to adore him^t, being directed to the place where he was, by the same star, (probably by a ray darted from the star, or the star appearing in the lower region of the air, and so low as to point out the house.) They might also have some revelation concerning the appearance of this star, or at least be illuminated or incited by the divine Spirit, as well as they were afterwards warned of God in a dream not to return to Herod^u.

Further, from this general expectancy it was that King Herod was so troubled at the report of those wise men, and ordered the slaughter of the children in and about Bethlehem, hoping to destroy him^x.

The expectancy above mentioned, of the birth of some great king at that time, might be in part occasioned by the heathen ^y oracles (as the devils themselves were forced to acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God^z,) but chiefly by the Jews, being dispersed all over the east, and their having filled all that part of the world with the fame of what they

fatis ut eo tempore, Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Upon which Casaubon remarks, that much the same words being used by both the historians, they recite the very words of the oracle.

^a Virg. Ecce Dionæi processit Cæsaris astrum, vid. Grot. in Matt. ii. 2.

^t Matt. ii.

^u Verse 12. Chrysostom

thought it some invisible or divine power in the shape of a star, in Matt. ii. 1.

^x Matt. ii.

^y According to what is above

cited out of Tacitus and Suetonius.

^z Matt. viii. 29.

then looked for; *viz.* the appearance of the Messiah^a; since the prophet Daniel, as hath been shewn, had foretold when the Messiah should appear, and they knew that the time prefixed by that prophet was then expired; and Josephus assures us, that this expectancy of one that should be emperor of the world (the Messiah) was at this time so earnest, that it was one chief cause of the Jews rebelling against the Romans^b. It was also the cause of divers impostors about that time, who pretended to be the Messiah^c, and of so many Jews being seduced by them, which we do not find happened before this age of the world; no doubt, because they apprehended the time which Daniel prefixed was not expired till then^d. It was upon the account of this expectancy that Simeon is said to be waiting for the consolation of Israel, that is, the coming of the Messiah^e. For the same reason many *went out to John the Baptist*, when he published *the kingdom of heaven*, that is, the kingdom of the Messiah, *is at hand*^f: and when John had many disciples and followers, *the people mused in their hearts, whether he, himself, was the Christ*, the Messiah, *or not*^g, *viz.* whom they then expected; being taught by their doctors, or rabbies, so to understand the prophet Daniel before mentioned, and other prophecies of him, as that he was even then to appear^h. And because it was the customⁱ to strew clothes and branches in the way, in honour of great

^a Concerning the signification of the term Messiah, see what has been said on the third chapter of Genesis, Part I. ^b Wars, book vii. chap. 12. at the end, Gr. l. vi. c. 5. Ita et Suetonius, l. viii. c. 4. in Vespas. (post antea citata verba, esse in fatis ut eo tempore, Judæa profecti rerum potirentur) id, de imperatore Romano prædictum, Judæi ad se trahentes, rebellarunt. ^c Acts v. 36, 37. ^d Of these false Christs, see Bishop Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part iii. c. 10. and Dr. Whitby on Matt. xxiv. 5. ^e Luke ii. 25, 38. ^f Matt. iii. ^g Luke iii. 15. ^h See also Luke vii. 16, 17, 18, 19. John i. 41. and vi. 14, 15. ⁱ Hammond in Matt. xxi. 8, 9.

kings; and also, at the *feast of Tabernacles*, to carry branches, and sing hosannahs, (the sense of which word is an abbreviation of this sentence, *save, or prosper us, we pray*;) therefore many of the Jews, supposing Jesus to be the expected Messiah, and that he proceeded from David, *spread their garments, and strewed branches, and cried, Hosannah!* that is, *save now, this we pray for the Son of David*, or, according to the Jewish construction, *all prosperity be to the Son of David*^k.

But herein was their mistake; they expected he should appear as a temporal king, who should conquer the Romans, and obtain the command of the whole world, and set them up to be the lords thereof, under him; whereby they should enjoy peace and quiet, and all temporal felicities and delights, and that in their own land; being taught so to understand the prophecies of the Messiah, in a literal sense^l.

One of the ancient Christian apologists gives this account of their mistake; *viz.* that whereas two advents of the Messiah were to be expected; the first in a state of humiliation, at his first appearance in the world; the second, by a manifestation of divine glory and power, at the last day especially; by not understanding the first, they fixed wholly on the

^k Matt. xxi. 8, 9. Hosannah pro Hosiah, na. Read Casaubon exercit. 16. anni 34. num. 5. and consult Robertsoni Thesaurum, sub voce Jashang, (יֶשָׁה) p. 373. Like the Roman acclamation, *Patri Patriæ*. Supple. *Salutem precamur*. ^l Such as Dan. vii. 13, 14, 18, 27. *To the Son of man was given dominion, and the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever.* And to the same purpose, Dan. ii. 44. Ezek. xxxvii. 25. Josephus, Wars, book vii. chap. 12, at the end. Just. Martyr. Trypho. p. 90. edit. Jebb. 1719. Lightf. Hor. in Job. vi. 31. Hieronym. in Mic. v. 8. and in Isa. vi. 1, &c. Maimon. de Pœnitentia, cap. ix. §. 4, p. 98. edit. Oxon. et in porta Mosis, p. 158, &c. edit. Oxon. 1655. And their posterity still expect it, Buxtorf. Synag. c. 50.

second, imagining no other appearance of Christ, but in majesty and splendour^m. And in this sense, it is saidⁿ, *They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear*. So also the Apostles themselves conceived, before they were more enlightened with the divine Spirit; and therefore they asked Christ when he was risen from the dead^o, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* According to this common notion among the Jews, Cleophas said of Christ^p, *We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*, that is, from their subjection under the Romans, and should have made them kings and princes; whereas his *kingdom*, or regal dignity and power, was *not of this world*, viz. not such as they expected; neither was it to come with observation, with that royal splendour and grandeur as they pretended, so as to be rendered conspicuous in the eye of the world, whereby men might say one to another, *lo it is here*, or *lo it is there*^q: but Christ's kingdom was a spiritual kingdom on earth, not to be established with armies, but by a more divine and invisible way, by his word and holy Spirit; yet so as that his dominion and power were far above all earthly kings; viz. over devils and evil spirits, to cast them out, to cure diseases, and to rule in the hearts of men, to subdue their passions and affections, to keep down the power of sin, to break through the bars of the grave, and to bring all his subjects to an everlasting kingdom in heaven; but then, as for his outward appearance, it was to be in much humility and meanness, and suffering; he was to have no such outward *form* or *comeliness*, as they pretended, but was to be *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*, to be wounded for our trans-

^m Tertull. Apolog. cap. xxi. ⁿ Luke xix. 11. ^o Acts i. 6.
^p Luke xxiv. 21. ^q Luke xvii. 20, 21.

gressions, to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep not to open his mouth, and at length, to be cut off out of the land of the living, and to pour out his soul unto death, as the prophet Isaiah^p and others had foretold of him.

The ancient rabbies of the Jews interpreted this prophecy to be meant^q of the Messiah; but in opposition to Jesus Christ, their latter doctors have^r invented two Messiahs; one the son of Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim, who should suffer and die; the other the son of David, of the tribe of Judah, who should be prosperous and triumphant. But this is a mere fiction; the Scriptures never mention any Messiah of the tribe of Ephraim, but only one of the tribe of Judah, or the son of David.

Now, though Christ, in all respects, fulfilled the prophecies, yet the body of the Jews, through their mistaken expectancy of a temporal prince, conceived a great prejudice against him; because of the meanness of his birth and condition upon earth. The thoughts that he was the son of a carpenter, and of a poor woman called Mary, and of the despised country of Galilee, where he most conversed, caused many to be *offended at him*, when they heard him speak of being their Messiah or Christ, *the Son of God*, and that he *came down from heaven*^s. This also offended them, that he spake of dying, when they expected their *Christ should abide for ever*^t. Hence the multitude, who a little before, from an admiration of his miraculous works, supposing him to be the Messiah, and a conquering Prince, had cried their *hosannahs* to him, and *spread their garments*

^p Chap. liii. ^q Cartwright. Mellif. Hebraic. Bishop Pearson on the Creed, p. 87, and 182. edit. 4th, London. 1676.

^r Bishop Pearson, *ibid.* p. 183. More particularly Dr. Pocock's appendix at the end of his commentary on Malachi. ^s Mark

vi. 3. ^t John xii. 34.

before him; at his being delivered up; cried out as loud, Let him be crucified^u.

Although there wanted not sufficient evidences to convince them, if they would have attended to them; as the Holy Spirit's descending on him, and a voice from heaven ^w declaring him to be the Son of God; the testimony of John the Baptist, that he was *the Lamb of God*, the Christ, (although *he knew him not*, that is, by face or conversation, till he was shewn to him by the spirit^x;) the heavenly nature of his doctrine, his casting out devils, raising the dead; and healing diseases, (insomuch that they owned, *we never saw it on this fashion*^y;) which miraculous works did evidently declare him to be the promised Messiah, who was to cure the blind and deaf, and lame, and dumb^z, and did *bear witness of him, that the Father had sent him*, and set his seal to the truth of all that Christ said^a: so that however their law was at first settled under Moses, by signs and wonders from heaven; yet a greater than Moses was here, to put an end to that dispensation, and by a stronger evidence establish one more perfect; for he had *done among them the works which no other man did*^b.

And what, though he spake of dying; yet they knew that he also said, he should *rise again*^c. Therefore, though he did not appear in that splendid manner, and with that earthly pomp and power as they expected, yet his appearance was declared to be truly the appearance of *the kingdom of heaven*, or the kingdom of God, that is, the kingdom of the Messiah, which they then looked for; and which Daniel had prophesied *the God of heaven should set up*^d. So ^e John the Baptist, the forerunner of

^u Matt. xxvii. 22.

^w Matt. iii. 16, 17.

^x John i. 33.

^y Mark ii. 12.

^z Isa. xxxv. 5, 6, 7.

^a John v. 36, &c.

^b John xv. 24.

^c Matt. xxvii. 63.

^d Dan. ii. 44.

^e Matt.

iii. 2.

this great Lord Christ, prepared the people, and bid them *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; that is, the coming of Christ the Messiah is now approaching (as it was revealed to him, though he then did not know him personally^f.)

And as for that other prejudice they conceived against him, from the place of his most constant abode, *viz.* Galilee, which was so despicable in the opinion of the Jews, that they affirmed, *out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*, and were surprised to hear that Christ should *come out of Galilee*^g. This proceeded from their gross ignorance of the famous prophecy in Isaiah^h; to understand which we must remember, that the chiefest part of Galilee was the land or lot of Zebulon and Naphthali: now the inhabitants of that country were the first who had the misfortune to be carried captive by the Assyriansⁱ; in ^k recompence of which heavy disadvantage, above the rest of their brethren, Isaiah comforts them by this prophecy, that they should have the first and chiefest share of the presence and conversation of the Messiah which was to come; that people should *see a great light*; upon them, it should be said, *hath the light shined*; for, ¹ *unto us a child is born*; &c. which prophecy is so interpreted, Matt. iv. 12—17. Christ indeed (as the Jews said he should be) was born in Bethlehem of Judea, but he was by habitation and conversation *a Galilean*; he was conceived and brought up in Nazareth of Galilee; when he began the solemn publication of his Gospel, he chose Capernaum in Galilee for his station; his disciples were *men of Galilee*; the beginning of his miracles was *at Cana of Galilee*; and

^f John i. 31, 33. See also Matt. x. 7. Luke ix. 2. and x. 9, 11. So in many of Christ's parables. ^g John vii. 41, 52. ^h Chap. ix. 1—8. ⁱ 2 Kings xv. 29. ^k Mr. Mede, book i. disc. 25. ¹ Ver. 6.

the greatest part of his miracles, which he did afterwards, was in that country: in a word, his ordinary residence was in Galilee, though he came to Judea and Jerusalem at the feast-times, when the whole nation assembled there.

Further, we may here remark, that those who received the glad tidings published by Christ, were not generally *the wise and prudent*, who were possessed either with worldly wisdom, or with a conceit of their knowledge above others, as the Scribes and Pharisees: to those the Gospel was not agreeable, both because not suited to their worldly projects of laying up treasures upon earth, and also by reason of their self-conceit, and their being taken up with their numerous traditions, and vain janglings; but the babes in Christ, the humble and modest, who, having a low esteem of their own knowledge, were best qualified for the heavenly wisdom, and so most ready to receive it; and also the poorer sort, whose mean condition carried them the farthest off from the expectancy of the pleasures, honours, or riches of this world, and being inured to poverty and hardships, became the less offended with the doctrine of the cross, and the better disposed to embrace the promises of a better life¹. *Lastly*, though Christ was to be a *light*, and Saviour to the Gentiles, yet he was *not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*^m, that is, in his own person he was to appear only among them, but he commissioned his apostles to publish him to all the worldⁿ.

Third remark. For the more distinct understanding several passages of the holy Gospels, it is requisite to enquire into the state and present condition of the Jewish people at the time of our Saviour's appearance among them, both in regard to their civil and ecclesiastical affairs. And,

¹ See Matt. xi. 5, 25. ^m Mark vii. 26. ⁿ Matt. xxviii. 19.

First, They being in subjection to the Romans^o, had little or no authority in themselves, but what was allowed them by the Roman powers, who appointed procurators, or governors^p. These had the full power of judicature in Judea, but their chief residence was at Cæsarea, (on the coast of the Mediterranean, or Great sea.) Such an one, in our Saviour's time, was Pontius Pilate: at the same time, by the favour of the Romans, Herod Antipas, (one of the sons of Herod the Great,) called the Tetrarch, had the jurisdiction of Galilee^q.

Secondly, As for the Jews themselves, they were in some measure allowed the authority of the Sanhedrim, or Great Council at Jerusalem, which consisted of the priests and Levites, and other persons of note and learning among them^r, wherein the high-priest bore a great sway, but they had not the power of life and death^s.

Thirdly, In Christ's time the laws of God given by Moses were much perverted and abused, by false 'glosses and interpretations, especially by the Scribes and Pharisees, (whom Christ particularly names, because the former were esteemed the most learned, as the latter the most religious;) for instance, because they found not any express declarations to the contrary in the law of Moses, they took little care for the government of the mind and heart, (as appears from our Lord's asserting the design of the commandments, to extend to inward as well as outward guilt^u, in opposition to them;) nor how they approved themselves before God in secret, so they did but carry themselves fair, in appearing to fulfil the law; whence our Lord instructed men to exceed the righteousness of such, by inward purity of

* See Part I. chap. xxi.

xxi.

Matt. v. 20.

^r Ibid. chap. xiv.

^u Matt. v. 21, &c.

^p Ibid. chap. xxii.

^s Ibid. chap. xxii.

c

^q Ibid. chap.

^t Grot. in

heart^x. Again, it seems, some of them taught only a partial obedience to the commandments, as if there were no danger in transgressing some of them; whence Christ assures, *Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven*^y. They were also generally mistaken in being very punctual in performing the externals of religion, or the outward carnal rites, relying wholly upon the very doing the work, and esteeming a mere bodily service as meritorious, by a bare observance of the letter of the law, without attending to the inward and spiritual righteousness^z, which was most acceptable to God: but Christ declared^a, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth*; which does not suppose that God, under the Gospel, requires only a spiritual, and not an external worship; for this last is according to the ordinances of the Gospel, which appoints the holy sacraments, prayer, and thanksgiving; and encourages, by the example of our Saviour and the Apostles, a worshipping with the proper and reverend gestures of the body, as bowing or falling down, kneeling, &c. but the worshipping the Father *in spirit and in truth*, is to worship him, not in types, and with the carnal sacrifices under the law, (which were now to cease, and in the outward performance of which the Jews chiefly confided,) but according to the truth of things^b which were only shadowed in the law, but manifested in Christ; and according to the spiritual worship under the Gospel, that is, with a pure heart, and by devout prayers and

^x Matt. v. ^y Matt. v. 19. ^z The same which Justin Martyr laid to their charge, Dial. cum Tryph. p. 44. edit. Jebb. Lond. 1719. ^a John iv. 23. ^b Grot. in loc. and Mele, book i. disc. 12.

praises, and a holy conversation. This appears to be the meaning of this passage, from the occasion of Christ's mentioning it, in answer to the Samaritan woman's question, concerning the true place of the Jewish worship, and their outward typical sacrifices, whether at Jerusalem, or mount Gerizim^c.

Again, besides the written laws, the Jews, especially the Pharisees, (a great sect among them,) had "oral and unwritten traditions^d," that is, interpretations of the law, and many customs, which they pretended Moses had not written down, but, being instructed by God therein, taught by word of mouth; and so they were conveyed first by Joshua, then by the elders of the Sanhedrim or council, and others, from age to age, down to their time, as so many fences of the law; such as washing their hands before meat, washing pots and cups, &c. and this they were taught to do, not so much for cleanliness, as upon the score of conscience and religion, for fear of any legal defilement that might have happened to such parts or things: for they had taken up an opinion, that any thing which was touched by a person unclean by the law, did communicate such an uncleanness to their bodies, and then to their souls; but that this ceremonial washing did purify both body and soul, and therefore was pleasing to God. In the performance of these, and such like, they put most confidence, and taught them to be "necessary and good in themselves," and of "equal force" with the written law; nay, they esteemed such traditions above^e the law, it being a maxim amongst them, that "it is a greater sin to act in contradiction to the words of the Scribes, than of

^c John iv. 10, 21. See the first part, chap. 20. concerning this mount Gerizim in Samaria.

^d Maimon. *Porta Mosis*, p. 5, 33, &c. and 35. Hottinger. *Thesaur.* p. 560. l. ii. c. 3. §. 3. Lightf. *Hor.* in Matt. xv. 2. et in Mark viii. 12. Grot. in Matt. xv. 2.

^e Hottinger and Lightfoot, *ibid.*

the written law; and that the former ought to be more attended to than the latter, the written law being as the body or clothing, but the unwritten as the soul:" directly contrary to the instructions of the old prophets, who, on all occasions, refer the people to the written law of Moses. This remark will explain a great part of Christ's sermon on the mount^f, and of his discourses with the Scribes and Pharisees, who were much bent against him, for exposing their hypocrisies and corruptions of the law, and for preaching down their traditions.

This remark does also explain what our Saviour means by this^g, *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*; not that all commandments of men, or of the governors of the church, (in things indifferent, and tending to decency, order, and edification in religious worship,) are here condemned; on the contrary, St. Paul enjoins such orders to be observed^h; but such commandments, or traditions, which our Lord is here speaking ofⁱ, which the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees taught for doctrines, imposing them as necessary, as if they were of equal authority with God's laws, and good in themselves, as we observed before the Jews esteemed their traditions; and also whereby they *made the commandments of God of none effect*^k.

By the two last remarks, we also see how it came to pass, that, although Christ did so much good, and fulfilled all prophecies, and wrought so many wonderful works, yet he was so hated by many of the Jews, especially the Scribes and Pharisees, and not owned as their Messiah, namely, because his outward appearance was so mean, and yet he professed himself to be the Son of God; and because he

^f Matt. v. vi. vii.
and last verse.

^g Matt. xv. 9.

ⁱ Verse 2.

^h 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

^k Ver. 5, 6.

was so free in laying open their hypocrisies and abuses of the law, and reliance on their traditions: so that even truth itself, because it was unacceptable, and against their inclinations and former persuasion, could not gain a consent; but was stifled and overpowered by the prevailing force of their affections and prejudice, which indisposed them for an equal judgment of things; insomuch, that they consulted to put Lazarus to death, on whom Christ had shewn so signal a miracle, by raising him from the dead, in order to stifle the belief in him¹; and at length became so obstinate and malicious, that they would rather attribute the most convincing miracles to *the prince of devils*, than the power of God. So truly did the Jews, by hardening their hearts, and shutting their eyes, fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah^m; and so much reason had Christ to charge them with their prejudice and obstinacyⁿ, till they were abandoned by God, and given up to their own hardness and impenitency; which however made way for the execution of what God had purposed, to save mankind by the death of Christ; in procuring which they would never have been instrumental, had they known and heartily believed in him.

Further, such was the veneration they had for the law and their traditions, that it occasioned their resolutions to put Christ to death; for, since there was then a general expectancy of the appearance of the Messiah, whom they fancied to be a temporal prince, they were apprehensive that so many people following Christ, he should set up for such an one, and that might raise the jealousy of the Romans, to whom they were in subjection, and so far incense them, as to *come and take away their place and nation*^o, that is, destroy their temple, with their religion and

¹ John xii.^m Chap. vi. 9, 10.ⁿ Matt. xiii. 14, 15.^o John xi. 48.

government, and bring them to perfect slavery; to prevent which, they would put Christ to death; which very action brought that judgment on them, as hath been seen before.

To what has hitherto been said, concerning the cause of the unbelief of the Jews, *viz.* their misapprehensions of the appearance of the Messiah, as if it were to be like a temporal prince, and also their veneration for their law and traditions; we may further add their prejudice against the doctrine of the Gospel, because it equalled them (who were the posterity of Abraham, and God's peculiar people) with the other nations and people of the world, as to their title in God's covenant and promises^p. Against all these strong prejudices, Christ opposes his miraculous works, without which the unbelieving Jews would have been more excusable^q: *If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated me and my Father.*

Fourthly, There were in Christ's time, among the Jews, several orders and conditions, with divers sects and parties. Those whom they called Gentiles^r, were all the people of the world who were not Jews, or not of the posterity of Abraham: these are also called Greeks^s. Those of the Gentiles who worshipped the God of Israel were termed *proselytes*.

A *proselyte*^t (which signifies one that came over^u, and joined himself to the Jews) was twofold, either a *proselyte of the covenant*, or else a *proselyte of the gate*.

A *proselyte of the covenant* was one, who being a Gentile, no Jew by birth, yet, when instructed in

^p Of this see the account given of the Acts of the Apostles, on chap. x. ^q John xv. 24. ^r Εἰδῆ, Matt. iv. 15. ^s Ἕλληνες, Acts xviii. 17. ^t Casaubon. Exercit. 1. §. 3. num. v. p. 24, 25, 26. Mede, book i. disc. 3. Hottinger. Thesaur. l. i. cap. i. §. 3. p. 16, &c. Prideaux's Connect. part ii. book v. sub Ann. 129. ^u Α προσκυθεναι,

the law of Moses, took upon him the sign of the covenant by being circumcised, and also baptized before two witnesses: then he submitted to the whole law, and so became a Jew, living and worshipping God as the Jews did, and differed nothing from a Jew, only he was not born so, but made a Jew, being esteemed by them as a *new-born* child^x. While their temple stood, such a proselyte was received by the offering of a sacrifice^y, as well as by circumcision and baptism.

A proselyte of the gate was a Gentile who inhabited within the gates of Israel, or among the Jews; and having renounced idolatry, worshipped the true God of Israel, yet was not circumcised, nor obliged to observe the ceremonial law, but only to keep the seven precepts of Noah, viz. (as the Jews reckoned them,) to cast off idols; to worship the one true God; to commit no murder; not to be defiled with fornication; to avoid rapine, theft, and robbery; to be careful in administering justice; and, lastly, to abstain from eating blood, (which have been spoken of before, concerning the state of mankind after the flood.) Such a one was called a devout or worshipping man or woman^z. This last kind were still esteemed Gentiles, and so called because of their uncircumcision, and were according to the law unclean, and such as no Jew might converse withal, nor were they properly members of the Jewish church; but they were admitted into the Jewish temple and synagogues, and to the hopes of the life to come, because they worshipped the true God only; yet, while the temple stood, they were not suffered to come into the *courts of Israel*, but into the outward court, called the *court of the Gentiles*^a.

^x Compare John iii. 5, 10. ^y Casaub. &c. ut supra. ^z Acts x. 2. and xvi. 14. ^a See the last mentioned authors.

Tetrarchs, as Herod's sons were called, who governed after him, as hath been already shewn.

Centurions, or officers over an hundred soldiers.

Publicans^b, who were the collectors, and sometimes farmers or renters of the impositions or taxes which the Romans exacted of the Jews: they were often grievous oppressors, and therefore very odious to the Jews, especially if those officers were Jews themselves, as sometimes they were; as Matthew, before his being called by Christ to be an apostle, and Zaccheus. Besides, the Jews, of all people, were for liberty, and abhorred all subjection to any of another nation; and since they took the payment of taxes for a sign of slavery, no wonder they should so detest the collectors of them.

Scribes^c, whose office was to copy out of the book of the law of Moses, and being well versed therein, to explain the meaning thereof; as also to interpret the Jewish traditions: they are therefore sometimes called lawyers.

Rabbies, doctors, or teachers.

Pharisees, the strictest sect among the Jews, who appeared to be the most nice observers of the law of Moses, and of the traditions of their elders or doctors; accordingly, their name was given them from *Pharas*, a word which signifies to divide or separate from others: from the opinion of their own goodness, they despised all others besides their own party, and therefore upbraided our Saviour, that he accompanied *with publicans and sinners*. By their shew of religion, they procured a great esteem of themselves, and had a mighty influence on the government, and the people in general; insomuch that one of the Maccabees, by opposing them, *put himself and his sons quite out of credit*.

^b Grot. et Lightf. Hor. in Matt. v. 46. ^c Hottinger's Thesaurus, l. i. c. ii. p. 74. Lightf. Hor. in Matt. ii. 4.

with the common people. But how religious soever they might be in their way, they were not sincere, but were great hypocrites; their aim being *to be seen of men*^d. And they were very covetous, “engrossing the profits of the government,” proud and censorious^e. Scribes and Pharisees are often joined together in the Gospel; but the Scribes were of an office, the Pharisees of a sect; and both condemned by Christ for making their traditions to be of equal authority with the written law, and for their hypocrisy and covetousness; and ^f for *making broad their phylacteries*, that is, strips ^g of parchment, which they wore on their foreheads, on which were written some sentences of the law, (the word *phylacteries* signifying keepers or preservers,) and this they did by mistaking the spiritual sense of Exod. xiii. 16, that the law should be *for frontlets between thine eyes*, and understanding them literally, as serving to keep the law in continual memory. Now these phylacteries, for the greater ostentation and shew, they made very broad, that they should be the more observed by the people; and to the same end also, *enlarged their borders*, or fringes, *of their garments*, which were appointed to make people mindful of God’s commands^h.

Sadducees, who denied ⁱ any interposition of God in men’s actions, whether they did good or evil, but that they were left to themselves. They also denied a future state, or reward after this life^k; which errors it is believed they fell into from one Sadoc, who, mistaking the words of his master Antigonus, *viz.* that “men should serve God, not as mercenaries, for

^d Matt. xxiii. 5. ^e Joseph. Antiq. book xviii. chap. 2. and book xiii. chap. 18. and Wars, book i. chap. 4. Pocock’s Not. Miscell. ad Portam Mosis, p. 851, &c. ^f Matt. xxiii. 5.
^g Lightf. in loc. ^h Num. xv. 38, 39. ⁱ Somewhat like Pelagius. See Joseph. Wars, book ii. chap. 7. and compare Grot. in Matt. xxii. 23. ^k Joseph. Antiq. book xviii. chap. 2.

what they got by him, but for himself, without expectation of reward," came to espouse those errors¹. And as a consequence thereof, they believed not the immortality of the soul, nor the resurrection from the dead, or that there were *angels or spirits*^m. Josephusⁿ observes, that there were not many of them, but that they were persons of the higher rank; however, that they were obliged to renounce their principles, when they bore any public office, and to comply with the contrary sentiments of the Pharisees; otherwise the people would not endure them.

Their principles had bad effects on them, for they were observed to be men of "rough ill manners", even one towards another." Josephus further remarks, that the "Pharisees had many traditions handed down from the fathers, which are not to be found among the laws of Moses, and which are rejected by the Sadducees, upon a persuasion that only the written laws are authoritative and binding:" he also adds, that "the Sadducees were supported by men of quality and substance, the Pharisees only by the favour of the multitude^p."

Herodians, whom Tertullian and others of the ancients affirm to be so called, because they believed Herod to be the Messiah; but others rather esteem them to be a party of the Sadducees, who adhered to Herod and his family, and espoused their interest and grandeur^q. Hence *the leaven of the Sadducees*, in Matt. xvi. 6. is called in Mark viii. 15. *the leaven of Herod*. Their particular tenet is not expressed; it might be a compliance with the civil government, by breaking through the commands of God; as Josephus accuses Herod himself of doing many things

¹ Hottinger. Thesaur. l. i. cap. 1. §. 5. p. 34. Lightfoot Hor. in Matt. iii. 7. ^m Acts xxiii. 8. ⁿ Joseph. ibid. ^o Joseph. de Bell. Gr. l. ii. cap. 8. ^p Joseph. Antiq. b. xiii. chap. 18. ^q Ham. and Lightf. Hor. in Matt. xxii. 16. Prideaux's Connect. part ii. book v. sub Ann. 107.

contrary to the law and religion, to ingratiate himself with the heathen emperor^r.

Zealots, Of these see what is said in the former part, concerning the siege of Jerusalem by Titus.

Essenes, who began about the time of the Macabees, when the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, mentioned before, forced many Jews to retire to woods and deserts. They lived in a very abstemious manner, and were very strict in some duties of religion; and, in many particulars, according to the doctrines of Christianity; but they could not be Christians, as some have fancied; for, living in retirement for the most part, we never read they had any conversation with Christ or his disciples; and amidst the accounts given of this sect^s, we find nothing of the redemption of the world by Christ, nor of the Christian sacraments; nor the resurrection of the body, which they denied, though they owned a future state, either happy or miserable, and many of their peculiar doctrines are condemned in the New Testament^t.

Samaritans, the posterity of those Assyrians, who were sent to Samaria by Salmanezer, when the kingdom of Israel was destroyed, as hath been said. These had, a long time before Christ's appearance in the world, renounced all their Pagan idolatries, (as it is believed, about 120 years after the settlement of the Jews, upon their return from the Babylonian captivity, by Nehemiah,) and embraced the Jewish religion^u; but they owned only the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, to be the holy Scriptures; and worshipped at mount Gerizim, in Samaria, as the Jews did at Jerusalem; so that for three chief causes,

^r Antiq. book xv. chap. 12. at the end. ^s Joseph. Wars, book ii. chap. 7. Antiq. book xviii. chap. 2. Hotting. Thesaur. l. i. c. 1. §. 5. p. 88, 39. ^t Prideaux's Connect. part ii. book v.

^u See the former Part, chap. xx.

viz. their proceeding from the strange nations of the Assyrians before mentioned ; the mixture at first of the Jewish and Pagan religion together ; and their temple and sacrifices at mount Gerizim, in opposition to those at Jerusalem ; there arose and still continued a great hatred and difference between the Samaritans and the Jews^x, insomuch, that the Jews thought they could not more reproach Christ, than by saying that he was a Samaritan, and (which they accounted came all to one) *had a devil*^y.

Fourth remark. Christ came not to *destroy*, or make void, *the law and the prophets*, but to *fulfil*^z; that is, first, To make good in himself, what was signified and shadowed by many parts of the law of Moses, to give substance instead of shadows. Secondly, To make clearer revelations of God's love to mankind, and *better promises*^a, not of temporal blessings only, but of spiritual and eternal ones. For although some *had respect unto the recompence of the reward hereafter*, and looked for a *better country*, that is, *an heavenly*^b; yet the generality of the Jews attended more to the rewards promised in this life; such as victory over their enemies, a prosperous condition, and such like; which, *on the performance of the law*, they were chiefly to expect^c. And although their doctors taught a resurrection and the state of happiness after this life, yet their doctrines were loose, uncertain, and different from each other; some placing the happiness in carnal delights, and such as men value in this world; others in a more spiritual enjoyment of God, and knowledge of him^d. Thirdly, Christ came to fulfil the law, that is, more fully to explain the grand design of it, by shewing

^x John iv. 9. ^y John viii. 48. ^z Matt. v. 17. ^a Heb. viii. 6. ^b Heb. xi. 16, 26. ^c Deut. vi. ^d Alii in resurrectione, alii in diebus Messiaë, alii in mundo futuro. See at large Maimon. Porta Mosis de fundamentis, p. 133, &c. and Pocock's Not. Misc. chap. vi. particularly page 90—114.

the sublimity or height of the commands, according to their full extent and intention, and by setting forth the spiritual import of them, together with those rules and precepts of inward purity and holy life, which he hath given us in the Gospel ; for one great design of the law was to make men really virtuous and good, by worshipping the true God, and trusting in him; and by loving and doing good one to another. Hence, even in the law itself, they are commanded to *love the Lord their God with all their soul^e*, and to *circumcise the foreskin of their hearts^f*. So that the law, at first, was like a picture rudely drawn, with a coal or pencil ; but Christ's fulfilling the law was like the painter's finishing the picture, filling it up, and drawing it to the life. •

Hence it appears, that the Jews themselves, though they pretended so much zeal for the law of Moses, yet by their misinterpretations, and keeping to the letter of the law, so as not to attend to the substance of what many of the Levitical ordinances were but shadows, nor to the spiritual meaning of them ; I say, by this means, the Jews themselves destroyed the law, as to the grand design and intent of it ; and Christ truly fulfilled, accomplished, and perfected it.

Thus much for Christ's *fulfilling the law*. In the next place, we are to observe what the Scripture saith of Christ's *fulfilling the prophecies*, so often mentioned in the Gospel ; as Matt. i. 22. *All this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, &c.* and in many other places. Some observe^g, that the particle *that* sometimes signifies not a cause or end, but only a consequence, and is of the same signification with *so that* ; and therefore they render the aforementioned passage thus, “ By the doing of all this it fell out so, than an ancient pro-

^e Deut. vi. 5.
Grot.

^f Deut. x. 16.

^g Hammond, &c. ex

phesy was fulfilled;" to strengthen which, it hath been furthermore observed, that all those circumstances of Christ's birth happened not to the end such prophecies should be fulfilled, but for the salvation of mankind. But to this it is replied^h, that there are several ends or causes of the same thing set forth in different places. So¹ one end of Christ's suffering is said to be the *leaving us an example of meekness and patience*; but there were other more eminent ends of Christ's sufferings, viz. that he might *reconcile us unto God*^k. So¹ one end of Christ's being born of a virgin, &c. was, *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet*. Another, ^m *to save his people from their sins*. So that there seems no necessity to depart from the plain sense of the expression, *That it might be fulfilled*; that is, such things were done, to the end that such a prophecy might be fulfilled, or, that it might appear that by such actions Christ did most signally accomplish such a prophecy concerning the Messiah. Not but that some of the prophecies, mentioned to be fulfilled by Christ in the Gospel, might at first be understood in the primary and literal sense, relating to the Jews; but the Holy Ghost teaches us, that they are also to be understood in a higher and mystical sense, in respect to Christ the Messiah, as hath been observed before in the third general remark on the prophets.

It is objected against this plain interpretation of the words, *That it might be fulfilled*, from John xii. 38. where it is said, the Jews believed not in Christ, that the saying of Isaiah might be fulfilled, *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, &c.*

^h Grotius et Spanhemius in Matt. i. 22. and Whitby's Appendix to the Gospel of St. Matthew. ¹ 1 Pet. ii. 21. ^k Eph. ii. 16. ¹ In the forementioned place, Matt. i. 22. ^m Matt. i. 21.

it being improper to affirm, they believed not, that this prediction might be verified: but then it is to be considered, first, That according to the propriety of the Jewish language, (often imitated in the New Testament,) by an action said to be done, is meant sometimes *a declaring*, or *permitting it to be done*ⁿ; and then the sense would be, they believed not, that the saying of Isaiah might be declared or shewn fulfilled. Secondly, That the Jews, by their own hardness of heart, had provoked God to leave them to their blindness and infidelity, and to permit them to continue in it; and the cause of this permission at that time was, that the saying of Isaiah might be fulfilled, which foretold that such an infidelity should happen in the days of the Messiah. So that although the proper cause of their infidelity was their own hardness of heart^o, yet the final cause of the Divine permission of that infidelity was, that the saying of Isaiah might be fulfilled. From all which it follows, that although it may be granted in some respects, things were not effected merely for the sake of such prophecies, but that such prophecies were uttered, because the things were to be effected; yet since it was God's decree, that such a thing should come to pass, as our redemption by Christ, notwithstanding he foresaw that the Jews, being left to their infidelity, would be the more hardened therein, and since it was also his pleasure, that their infidelity should be foretold by his prophets, it was therefore done, that God might execute his decree, which he had before declared by his prophet^p.

ⁿ As hath been proved in Part I. chap. i. §. 9. Numb. xxi.

^o S. Augustinus, tract. 53. in Johannem. Quidam inter se mussitant, dicentes, quid fecerunt Judæi? vel quæ culpa eorum fuit, si necesse fuit ut sermo Esaïæ impleretur? quibus respondemus, Deum præscium futurorum, per prophetam prædixisse infidelitatem Judæorum: prædixisse tamen, non fecisse. ^p See Grot. in Matt. i. 22.

Fifth remark: Our Lord is often termed in the Gospel, *the Son of God*; and by St. John he is called, *the Word*.

The ancient Jews understood the words^a, *I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, to be meant of the Messiah, whom they expected^b; in-somuch, that about our Saviour's time, the title of *the Son of God* was understood to belong to the Messiah or Christ; and therefore Nathaniel said unto Jesus, *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*^c; and Martha, *I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world*^d. Now, whatever notion the Jews had of the Messiah being *the Son of God*, (which seems to be obscure and uncertain about the time of our Lord's appearance in the world, when they dreamed so much of his being a temporal king,) we can have no other notion of the terms *Father* and *Son* in the proper sense, which it appears the Jews understood him in^e, but that they denote persons of the same nature; and however this term *Son of God* be in general sometimes attributed to creatures; as to Adam, and the angels, in regard to their original being from God, and to the ancient Jews and Christians by adoption; yet it is hard to give a just reason, why the Scripture should style the true God as being emphatically *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*^f, and also should style Christ not only *the Son of God*, but *the only-begotten of the Father*^g, and *his own Son*^h, unless it were with the design that we should apprehend by this propriety and singularity, that he so derived himself from the Father,

^a Psal. ii. 7. ^b Grot. in Matt. xiv. 33. Cartwright. Mel-lific. Hebraic. l. i. cap. 5. See also Psal. lxxxix. 26, 27. ^c John i. 49. ^d John xi. 27. See also Matt. xxvi. 63. ^e John iii. 16, 17, 18. and v. 17, 18. ^f Colos. i. 3. ^g John i. 14. and iii. 16. ^h Rom. viii. 32.

as being a proper Son of God, of the same uncreated essence with the Father, (as the terms *father* and *son* import among us,) but in so transcendent a manner, that we cannot conceive or define it. Indeed, in the order of nature, a father, as being the begetter or producer, is to be supposed to have a being first or prior to the son begotten or produced; and yet the Son of God is equally infinite with the Father; for in this argument we have nothing to do with the ordinary course of nature: the essence which God always had without beginning, without beginning he did communicate, being as well always Father, as always God; of which we have a faint resemblance in the sun, which is the producer of heat and light, and yet its heat and light is as ancient as itself; nor can one conceive a moment in which the sun was without them, though we cannot account for it; no more can we comprehend how God should have his being from himself, or from all eternity; and yet that is not the less true.

Furthermore, St. John calls Christ *the Word*^a; *In the beginning was the Word*, even then subsisting^b, or in being, *and the Word was with God*, as the second person may be said to be with the first, or the son with the father, *and the Word was God*; in which last sentence, the term *God* must be understood in the same sense, as it was in the former *with God*, to signify him who is truly and properly God as to his essence^c; or else the Apostle must be supposed to leave Christians liable to a great and dangerous mistake, by reason of the doubtful meaning of his words, which ought not to be charged upon

^a John i. 2, 3. ^b Grot. in loc. jam tum erat. Therefore he did not then begin to be.

^c The want of the article, in John i. 1. is no objection; for as Θεός expresses the Father without an article, John i. 6. so ο Θεός with an article expresses the Son, Matt. i. 23. See Bishop Pearson on the second Article of the Creed, and Dr. Waterland's Defence.

him, or rather the Holy Ghost. It follows, *The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Now hereby St. John shews, that the same who made, did also redeem the world: for the Jews understood that divine Being, by whom the world was created, by the term, *the Word^d*; Moses having written^e, *God SAID, Let there be light, and there was light*, and so on of the rest of the creation. Hence the Psalmist, *by the word of God the heavens were made^f*, which St. Peter imitated^g, *by the word of God the heavens were of old.* It seems also, that this term *Logos*, or *the Word*, in this sense, was gotten very early among the heathen, (probably by tradition from the Jews dispersed among them,) whereby they expressed the power of God in making the world^h: so that both Jews and Gentiles were in St. John's time well acquainted with the expression, and easily comprehended the meaning of it. By this it seems plain, that since he that *made, or built all things is Godⁱ*, St. John intended to be understood so, as to shew that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, being that *Word*, by whom all things were made, could not be himself a creature, but had a

^d As the Chaldee Paraphrase; see Grot. in Joh. i. 1. et De Verit. Rel. Christianæ, l. v. §. 21. Ham. in Luc. 1. not. 2. Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Artic. II. *His only Son*, p. 117. edit. 4. Lond. 1676. And although Dr. Lightf. (Hor. in Joh. i. 1.) observes, that the Chaldee *mimra* (*the word*) does sometimes signify only *ego*, *tu*, and *ipse*, and is applied to men; yet the two last instances given by Bishop Pearson shew plainly the application thereof only to God; as Gen. i. 17. *God created man*, is rendered, *The word of the Lord created man*: and Gen. iii. 8. *They heard the voice of the Lord God*, is rendered, *They heard the voice of the word of the Lord God*. Compare another writer's observation to the same purpose, (who must be allowed sufficiently conversant in the Jewish rabbinical learning,) Bishop Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part iii. chap. 5. ^e Gen. i. 3. ^f Psal. xxxiii. 6. ^g 2 Pet. iii. 5. ^h Grot. in Joh. 1. 1. Ham. in Luc. i. not. 2. ⁱ Gen. i. 1. Heb. iii. 4.

subsistence with the Father in the beginning, and was himself, together with the Father, one true eternal God^k. And this interpretation of St. John's words in the Gospel, is further confirmed by St. John himself^l, where the absolute eternity of the Son of God is described in the same words, as that of the Father is, *I am the first and the last*^m. It is manifest, that St. John brings in Christ so speaking, because he adds, *I am he that liveth, and was dead*. Now Isaiah brings in the Father thus speakingⁿ, *Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God*. To this we may add the words of Irenæus, who was trained up under Polycarp, St. John's disciple, "Neither the Lord, nor the Holy Spirit, nor the Apostle, would have called him, who was not God, by the name of God, at any time, if he had not been truly God^o."

This doctrine we are the more confirmed in, by Christ's appointing to *baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*^p. Now whether we understand the words *in the name*, on the minister's part; to signify, *by the authority and commission of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; or, that by the persons being baptized *in, or into* their name, is signified *his profession of faith in all three*, and his being as it were *listed under, and dedicated to their service*; it is plain, that hereby Christ sets every person in an equality, without any the least note of distinction, (more than that of a *personal* relation,) and that in the case of entering

^k Compare Rev. xix. 13. and also Heb. i. 10—13. where the Apostle applies to Christ what the Psalmist had said of Jehovah, the God of Israel, the Maker of heaven and earth, Psal. cii. 25, &c. ^l See at large Dr. Waterland's Defence of Queries.

^m Rev. i. 17. ⁿ Isaiah xli. 4. and xliv. 6. ^o Irenæus, l. iii. cap. 6. ad initium. ^p Matt. xxviii. 19.

one into covenant with the true God; in opposition to the heathen gods; and of placing a sinner in a state of reconciliation with God; and eternal salvation; which can only be offered and assured to men, in the name of the great and eternal God.

Here it may be proper to explain to the common reader the sense of the Christian church in two respects; *1st*, Concerning the three *persons* in the Godhead; *2dly*, Of Christ's being said to be God of the *substance* of the Father.

As for the *first*, By a *person* is not meant such a being as we commonly understand by that word, *viz.* a complete intelligent being, distinct from every other being; but thus those three, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, are in Scripture spoken of with as much distinction from one another, as we use to speak of three several persons, and yet they having equal attributes and perfections ascribed to them, are understood to partake of one and the same nature. So that the Church asserts three persons on the account of divine revelation, but in such a manner as to be agreeable to the Divine nature; which being infinite, is not, like our finite nature, capable of multiplication, separation, or division. These three persons are distinguished in Scripture by their personal properties; *viz.* either those which are *internal*, as having relation to each other; so it is the property of the *Father* to beget the Son, of the *Son* to be begotten of the Father, and of the *Holy Ghost* to proceed from the Father and the Son: they are also distinguished by those properties which are *external*, as having relation to the creatures, especially to the members of the church; so the creation of the world is in Scripture more particularly ascribed to the *Father*, the redemption to the *Son*, and the sanctification of God's people to the *Holy Ghost*.

2dly, As for Christ's being said to be *God of the substance of the Father*, it is not to be understood

as if God the Father were supposed to be endued with any bodily substance, such as goes under that name in things on earth ; for he is a spirit ; or that the Divine nature is capable of division or separation, as bodily substances are ; and therefore in this case there is no reasoning from bodily and sensible things. And although Christ was made *man of the substance of his mother*, as children are of their mother's substance, or a branch is of the substance of a tree, &c. yet we are not to conceive so of the Divine nature ; and therefore, when it is said that the Son is begotten or derived, it is not to be understood that he is of a distinct substance, or is a distinct being, but a distinct person. The word *consubstantiality*, as to Christ, is a term taken up by the Church in opposition to heretics, chiefly Sabellius and Arius ; the former of which, about the year 260, pretended that there was no difference between the Persons in the Trinity, but that they were all one Person under three names ; and Arius, about the year 306, would understand Christ to be only a creature, and to have had a beginning, denying his divinity, yet acknowledging him, by reason of his excellency, to be styled God in Scripture. And because those heretics and their followers made use of several evasive and coined expressions, and sheltered themselves under ambiguous terms, the fathers of the Nicene council fixed on the term *substance*, and *consubstantial*, (or of the same being,) which was not a term then newly used, but had been applied to the same purpose before, and was esteemed most fully to preserve the order and distinction of the persons Father and Son in the Holy Trinity, together with the essential divinity of the Son, without destroying the unity ; as signifying the Son's being not a *creature*, or only God by *name* ; but as partaking of the Divine nature, and enjoying all the essential perfections of the Father in common with him, as it is set forth in the

holy Scripture ; so as that the Son be acknowledged as one and the same God, together with the Father^P : but the manner being not revealed, and inconceivable to us, the Church hath not determined it.

To conclude this account of Christ's being styled *the Son of God*, and *the Word*, in the holy Gospel ; we find that to him, as to the Father, are ascribed the same titles of *Lord* and *God*, the same high powers, attributes, and perfections, and also the same adoration, honour, and worship ; and yet in the Scripture it is also constantly asserted, that there is but *one God*, or that *God is one* ; and therefore, by the Scripture, the Father and the Son, with the Holy Ghost, are in essence or being that *one God*. But we are not to expect, that, searching into *the deep things of God*, our finite reason and understanding should ever be able to comprehend (at least on earth) his infinite nature, not only in respect to the Trinity, but in many other regards besides ; as how God is eternal, without any beginning ; how he foreknows future contingencies, (that is, things to come, which depend on uncertain causes, and the actings of free agents, &c.) or in respect to other Articles of our Creed. We find in Scripture the doctrine of the resurrection of the body ; by which we understand that our bodies, however decayed in the earth, shall be raised again, and united to our souls ; but after what manner we understand not : all which yet we profess to believe. So that in respect to these matters, which are and will be mysteries, without further revelation, " We believe as we conceive, not distinctly and particularly, but generally, as our ideas or conceptions are ; and we must be content with

^P Socrates, Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 5, 6, 7, 8. and l. iii. c. 25. Theodor. l. iv. c. 2. Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Artic. II. *His only Son*, p. 135, 137. edit. 4. ad marginem. Bp. Bull, *Defensio* fid. Nic. c. 1.

such imperfect knowledge, and assent as far as our conceptions go ; believing in part, what is revealed in part, or what we now only *see as through a glass darkly*, and can only *know in part*. But it is unreasonable to deny our assent to the truth of any thing, or the reality of its existence, only because the manner of its existing is unknown to us." Lastly, Seeing the church of Christ in the next ages to the inspired writers, as well as for so many ages since, to this time, hath understood the Scriptures in the sense above mentioned, it is certainly our duty, and safest for us, to acquiesce therein ; though we cannot account for the manner, in a point confessedly above our comprehension ; adoring God for his unspeakable goodness, who *so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Sixth remark. The reason why our Lord calls himself *the Son of man*, seems to be chiefly in reference to that famous prophecy^a, which the Jews themselves understood concerning the Messiah and his kingdom^r: *I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days ; and there was given him dominion, glory, and a kingdom.* Hence our Lord takes on him the same title, as being the true Messiah^s, *The Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father ; and^t, Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* And^u, *As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself ; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man^v.* Hereby Christ declared, that how lowly soever

^a Mede, book iv. epistle xv. ^r Cartwright. Mellific. Hebraic. Dan. vii. 13, 14. ^s Matt. xvi. 27. ^t Luke xxi. 27.

^u John v. 26, 27. ^v Compare Rev. xiv. 14.

he now appeared, and had not where to lay his head, yet he was the same which Daniel prophesied should one day appear so gloriously. The reason why in this prophecy Christ is called *the Son of man*, may be, because he was therein foretold to receive the kingdom, not barely as God, co-eternal with the Father, but as being the Messiah, who was to take upon him the nature of man.

The calling Ezekiel so often *Son of man*, was upon some other account, probably to keep him humble, and prevent his being too much exalted with the many heavenly visions which he saw.

Seventh remark. There was great reason why the Messiah or Saviour should be the Son of God, and also should take upon him the nature of man, viz. that the Divine justice might be satisfied, and honour vindicated; for though God designed man's redemption out of his love and goodness, yet it was requisite that consideration should be had to his honour and justice, which was done by the sufferings of Christ, being God as well as man; the excellency and dignity of his person raising the value and merit of his sufferings. Thus much plainly appears from Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. *Being justified freely by his grace*, (as to the motive of it,) *through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, (as to the meritorious cause,) *whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, that he might be just*, (to do nothing inconsistent with his own divine justice,) in remitting sins past; inasmuch as Christ has made satisfaction for them, by his most precious blood. It is not for us to say, by what other method God might have been reconciled to us; we are to adore, and walk worthy of his abundant love, in sending his Son to be our Redeemer. Again, the *honour* of God was vindicated by the obedience of Christ, who fulfilled all righteousness; especially since he suffered and performed the obedience in the same nature of man,

which had by sin offended God's justice, and broken his laws^y.

Eighth remark. Christ, or the Messiah, as he was man, was to proceed out of the house of David: for God promised David, *Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever*^z. Accordingly Isaiah foretold, *Hear ye now, O house of David, &c. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, &c.* God indeed bade Ahaz *ask a sign; but Ahaz said, I will not ask;* and then follows the promise, not to Ahaz alone, but *to the whole house of David*^a.

Here, by the way, we learn a proper answer to the objection of the Jews against this prophecy of the Messiah, which being uttered so many ages before Christ's birth, they think could not be a sign to Ahaz at that time: forasmuch as the promise of the Messiah was a security to *the house of David*, under that their present danger of an invasion by the kings of Syria and Samaria, that they should not be extinguished, but that the Messiah, of the seed of David, was one day to appear, and establish his throne.

Furthermore, Jeremiah prophesied, *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch*^b. It is said, indeed, that some of the Herodians (a spawn of the Sadducees^c, who adhered to Herod the Great) pretended that Herod, (who was no Jew, much less of David's posterity,) whom the Romans had made king of the Jews, was the Messiah^d; and afterwards,

^y This matter is thus explained by Irenæus, l. iii. c. 20. Hæ-
rere itaque fecit, et adunivit, quemadmodum prædiximus, ho-
minem Deo. Si enim homo vicisset inimicum hominis, non
juste victus esset inimicus: rursus autem, nisi Deus donasset
salutem, non firmiter haberemus eam, &c. vid. (in not. Græii
ad loc.) textum Græc. ^z 2 Sam. vii. 16. ^a Isa. vii. 10, &c.

^b Jer. xxiii. 5.

^c Ham. et Lightf. Hor. in Matt. xxii. 16,

^d Grot. et Ham. ibid.

Josephus would have Vespasian, the Roman emperor^c, to be the expected Prince, or Messiah. But as the Herodians pretended in flattery to Herod, so Josephus sought the favour of the Romans, and was kindly used by them, and he believed God had forsaken his own countrymen the Jews; so that it is not strange he should interpret oracles in favour of Vespasian, then emperor of so great a part of the world, and conqueror of the Jewish nation. But the generality of the Jews always expected the Messiah to proceed from King David^f; and there was none so usual and proper a name, which their rabbies were wont to call him by, as Ben David, or the Son of David. Hence the blind men besought Christ, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on us*^g. And when the people saw the miracles that he wrought, they said, *Is not this the Son of David?* that is, the Messiah whom we expect^h. And therefore we are to suppose, that the Virgin Mary was of the family of David, as well as Joseph; that Christ might be raised from the *loins of David*ⁱ.

And thus much appears from the angel's words to her^k, *Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son—He shall be great, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David*. She therefore, who conceived this Son, must be of the house of David, since Joseph was only his supposed father. And otherwise she could not have gone to Bethlehem, the city of David, to be taxed or enrolled^l, but must have gone to another place; for it is said^m, that *all went to be taxed, every one to his own city*, that is, where their ancestors were born, that their names, family, dignity, and condition, might be recorded or registered.

^c Joseph. Wars, book vii. chap. 12. ^f Lightf. Hor. in
 Matt. i. 1. ^g Matt. ix. 27. ^h Matt. xii. 23. ⁱ Acts
 ii. 30. ^k Luke i. 31, 32. ^l Luke ii. 5. ^m Verse 3.

Although the emperor hereby might design only to enquire into the strength and riches of his dominions; yet the admirable providence of God is here to be observed, in bringing it to pass, that this taxing or enrolment should be made at that very time, when the Virgin Mary was to be delivered; that she, living at Nazareth, might be obliged to go (above sixty miles) to Bethlehem, where Christ should be born, according as it was foretold^a. This ancient prophecy, of the place of the birth of the Messiah, was so well understood in Christ's time, that when Herod demanded of the chief priests and scribes, *where Christ should be born*, they readily answered, *in Bethlehem of Judea*^b. But what then did the Jews mean, when they affirmed it as a common and undoubted maxim^c, *When Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is*? They did not dispute but that he should at first appear to come from Bethlehem; but they had a^d tradition that he should presently hide himself for a time, and then appear again, as from an unknown place^e. Another instance of the divine Providence in the aforementioned taxing or enrolment, in respect to Christ, is, that the public records of that enrolment, which expressed the children as well as others, should give testimony both to the place of his birth and his family^f.

The Evangelists^g deduce the genealogy of Christ from Joseph, his reputed father, that so they might thereby shew that even in that respect he belonged to the tribe of Judah, and the family of David;

^a Micah v. 2. ^b Matt. ii. 4, 5. ^c John vii. 27. ^d Lightf. Hor. in Joh. vii. 27. ^e Hence Trypho the Jew argued, that if the Messiah was come, he was unknown, nay, that he did not know himself to be such a one, nor had any power till Elias came and anointed him, and made him manifest. J. Martyr, Dialog. cum Tryphone, edit. Jebb. p. 29. ^f Grot. in Luc. ii. 5. ^g Matt. i. 16. Luke iii. 23.

otherwise the Jews might have objected against his pretences of being the Messiah, for they apprehended no other to be his father besides Joseph^u. Again, there is another reason why the genealogy of Christ should be deduced from Joseph, though he was only his reputed father; because of that rule among the Jews, *the family on the mother's side is not to be called a family*^x; for both these reasons, it was necessary to shew, that Joseph, the supposed father of Christ, was of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David, from which tribe and family the Messiah was to come; the reason why Christ is said to be *the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*^y, that is, of their posterity, without mentioning any between them, is, because of God's particular covenant with, and promise to these two, that the Messiah (*viz.* as man) should proceed from them^z, the mentioning this was most suitable to the notions of the Jews, and their expectancy of the Messiah, that he should come of the family of David, whose ancestor was Abraham.

The difficulties^a in reconciling the genealogy in Matt. i. with that in Luke iii. are not easy to be cleared at this distance of time, the tables of the Jewish pedigrees being lost so long ago. These general rules have been laid down; *viz.* first, that the Jews reckoned their genealogy not only by a natural, but legal descent, and that either by adoption, or marriage; so for instance, Jacob^b might be the proper father of Joseph, and Eli^c his father by the law. Secondly, They were also wont to call a person *the son* of such a one, though after a generation or two, and to reckon the grandson the son of the grand-

^u John vi. 42. ^x Lightf. Hor. in Matt. i. 16. ^y Matt. i. 1. ^z Gen. xxii. 18. compared with Acts iii. 25, 26. 2 Sam. vii. 16. ^a The reader may see a large account of this in Bishop Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part ii. chap. 6. &c. ^b Matt. i. 16. ^c Luke iii. 25.

father; as the posterity of Israel are often called his sons. However, the main design of the Evangelist is to be respected, viz. to shew, that Jesus is the Messiah, of the offspring of David, and of the posterity of Abraham. Matthew ended the genealogy with Abraham, for the sake of the Jews, who knew the Messiah should be one of his posterity, according to God's covenant with him. Luke carried it up to Adam, (to whom the Messiah was promised, and called *the Seed of the woman*,) no doubt to comfort the Gentiles, with their interest in Christ; forasmuch as they are the posterity or sons of Adam, though not the proper posterity of Abraham.

Though Bèthlehem was the city of the ancestors of Joseph and Mary, as hath been said, yet they; and Christ with them; till his manifestation; dwelt at Nazareth in Galilee, a very contemptible place, as were the inhabitants too; whence Nathaniel demanded^d, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* Hence^e Christ was called in contempt *a Nazarene*; and thereby very probably we are to understand^f, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene*; not that any one prophet said those express words, but the sense; for they spake of Christ, as *despised and reproached*^g.

Ninth remark. Concerning the dæmoniacks, or the possessed with the devil, we are to understand, 1st, That it hath been acknowledged both by Jews and Gentiles^h, that the devils have often possessed

^d John i. 46. ^e This interpretation may be learned from St. Chrysostom, ad 1 Cor. ii. 9. σου γινεσθαι μη δια των ρηματων, αλλα των πραγματα, &c. Though he assigns another on Matt. ii. viz. of the prophecy being lost; but then the Evangelist would scarcely have cited it. See Casaubon. exercit. 7. §. 2. ^f Matt. ii. 23. ^g Isa. liii. 3. Psal. lxxix. 9, 10. ^h The rabbies often mention the devils possessing and agitating persons, Lightf. Hor. in Matt. xvii. 15. and in Luc. xiii. 11. Compare

the bodies of mankind, and have been cast out : but they seem to have had the greatest power about the time of our Saviour's appearance, which did the more manifest our Lord's divine authority in casting them out, and destroying that power of theirs¹. For the truth of which, the primitive Christians^k appealed to the Jews and Gentiles. *2dly*, That the devils often afflicted men with diseases, which shewed the usual symptoms of those which are natural, either by altering the blood and spirits, or some other way occasioning such diseases : an instance we have in Job¹. This seems to be the case of the lunatic, who is said often to fall into the fire and water, and to foam like such as are afflicted with the falling sickness^m, which disease was brought upon him by the devil that possessed himⁿ ; for it is said, *Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him ; and the child was cured from that very hour*^o. Sometimes it seems, that the devil acted on the bodies of men, not after the usual manner of a natural disease, but in a more extraordinary way ; so on that man *with an unclean spirit*^p, who brake in sunder even chains and fetters. Those two also^q were *possessed*, in an extraordinary manner, *with devils*, which besought Christ to suffer them to go into the herd of swine.

Tenth remark. Christ was to shew himself, in

Irenæus, edit. Grabe, Oxon. 1702. l. ii. c. 5. *prope finem*, p. 123. l. 23. et notas *ibid.* And the ancient Chaldeans had a notion, that the dæmons, insinuating themselves into the entrails, caused epilepsies and frenzy. Stanley's History of Philosophy, part xv. chap. 16. and Plutarch mentions advice given by the magi, to those who were possessed, (*δαίμονιζομένων*;) to repeat the Ephesian verses, Sympos. l. vii. qu. 5. *prope finem*. And, which is very considerable, the power of ejecting devils continued in the church in the second century, as appears from the fathers cited by Grotius in Marc. xvi. 17. ¹ Matt. xii. 28, 29. ^k Just. Martyr. Trypho, ed. Jebb. p. 256. et Apolog. 2. §. 6. edit. Hutchin. Irenæus, *ibid.* alique apud Grot. loco jam laudato. ^l Chap. ii. 6, 7. ^m Matt. xvii. Luke ix. ⁿ Matt. xvii. 18. ^o See also Luke ix. 39. and xiii. 16. ^p Mark v. ^q In Matt. viii. 28, &c.

person only, in the country of the Jews, and to that people called *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*[†], who were the posterity of Jacob, or Israel: but he was to be published to the rest of the world, called Gentiles, by his apostles afterwards; and therefore, in his first mission of his apostles, whilst himself was living, he charged them[‡], *not to go into the way of the Gentiles*; but after his resurrection, he enlarged the commission, *Go teach all nations*[§].

Eleventh remark. Seeing Christ, according to the flesh, was of Jewish extraction, and lived and died in the country of the Jews; and seeing that people were generally his first converts and disciples, by whom the New Testament was written; it is necessary to observe the phrases, or forms of speaking, and allusions that we meet with therein; which related to the customs of the Jewish law; and some particular usages that were in our Saviour's time, which give light to divers passages in the holy Gospel. Such as,

First, The scribes and doctors, among the Jews, proudly affected to be saluted with peculiar titles of honour and respect[‡], above all others; as *rabbi*, *my father*, *my master*. Again, these rabbies and scribes claimed[‡] an authority to be believed and followed in whatsoever they taught; as if their words were equal to the law of God; nay, in some respect, to be more regarded; for they taught, that *a prophet from God ought to shew a sign or a miracle, but their traditions ought to be received on their own words*. This explains Matt. xxiii. 8, 9, 10. where Christ forbids to be called *Rabbi*, *Father*, or *Master*; not that titles of honour and respect are inconsistent with the Gospel, (as some mistake the place,) for St. John styles the aged, *Fathers*[¶]; and

[†] Matt. xv. 24. [‡] Matt. x. 5. [§] Matt. xxviii. 19. [¶] Lightf. Hor. in Matt. xxiii. 7. ^{*} Id. in Matt. xv. 2. [¶] 1 John ii. 13.

St. Paul styles himself a *father* to the Corinthians², and orders that *the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour*³: but, 1st, That we should not, like the Scribes and Pharisees among the Jews, proudly *affect* such titles of honour. And, 2dly, That although the governors of Christ's church on earth have such authority^b in matters of faith, as to take care the right faith be preserved, and the mouths of those stopped, who would corrupt the same^c, yet no man should challenge an absolute authority over the faith of men, so as to attribute unto earthly guides or *masters* (called also *fathers*) such infallibility as is due only to God, our Father in heaven; but that we adhere to the divine authority of the Scriptures, as the only infallible rule of faith and manners.

Secondly, The Jews esteemed the Gentiles so vile, that they accounted the very ground where they lived to be unclean; and therefore, when the Apostles, whom Christ sent to preach unto the Jews his kingdom, were rejected, he ordered them to *shake off the dust from their feet, as a testimony against them*^d, thereby expressing, that they would be no more concerned with them, and so would not have so much as the very dust of their ground, on which they trod, to cleave unto their feet; but that for the future they would esteem them as a heathen people, and such to whom God's covenant did not belong; for it was a doctrine taught amongst them, that the very dust^e of the ground of the Gentiles and heathen would pollute them. So that they took care how they carried away pot-herbs from any ground of a Gentile, lest some of the mould should be carried away with them, and defile the pure Israelites: by

² 1 Cor. iv. 15. ³ 1 Tim. v. 17. ^b The 20th article of the Church of England. ^c 1 Tim. i. 3. Tit. iii. 10. ^d Matt. x. 14. Luke ix. 5. ^e Lightf. Hor. in Matt. x. 14.

this action, the apostles went to testify against them; that they looked on them as no better than Gentiles, for refusing Christ and his doctrine.

Thirdly, In Christ's time, the Jews had their stated forms^f of prayer, in number eighteen; by which they were every day to pray to, and praise God; and because all could not so easily repeat so many, when at home, their doctors reduced the substance of them to a short compendium. In their synagogues, the *cazan*^g, or reader, repeats or sings the prayers very loud; with whom the rest join in a lower tone, especially those eighteen before mentioned, with others intermixed, which make up their liturgy, or public service.

Furthermore, besides these set forms for general use, the Jewish doctors were wont to compose other^h peculiar forms, which they taught their respective scholars; as *John taught his disciples*ⁱ, and which were more peculiarly adapted to their occasions and conditions. After the same manner^k, Christ prescribed a set form of prayer and praise, (which is therefore called *the Lord's Prayer*,) upon the request of his disciples, that he would teach them to pray, as *John taught his disciples*; which prayer of Christ is composed in the plural number, in compliance, no doubt, with that^l rule of the Jewish church, which obliged him that prayed, although he were alone, to associate himself with the church, that is, to reckon himself a fellow-member of the church; and so to pray for others, as well as himself. Hence Christ hath taught us to pray, not *My*, but *Our* Father which art in heaven, &c. It is also observed, that this our Lord's Prayer^m is for the most

^f Buxtorf. Synag. c. x. p. 207. Lightf. Hor. in Matt. vi. 9, &c. Leo Modena, pars i. cap. 10, 11. Prideaux's Connect. part i. b. vi. sub anno 444. ^g Leo Modena, *ibid.* ^h Lightf. Hor. in Matt. vi. 9. ⁱ Luke xi. ^k Matt. vi. and Luke xvii. ^l *Ibid.* ^m *Idem ibid.* ver. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

part composed out of the old Jewish forms above mentioned, (it being the custom of our Saviour to conform to the lawful and decent usages of the Jews in his time, both in civil and religious matters.)

Fourthly, When the Jews received proselytes, that is, persons that came over to their religion, they were "wont not only to circumcise, but also to sanctify or cleanse them by water, or baptize them; of which their doctors ascribe the original to Jacob's injunction to his household, that they should *put away the strange gods that were among them, and be clean, and change their garments*^o; and to Moses's command on mount Sinai, that they should *wash their clothes*^p. Hence John the Baptist in this manner received those that came to him, as new proselytes, repenting and forsaking their sins, and thereby being qualified for the kingdom of the Messiah, by baptizing them, and so preparing them for his coming^q, which rite afterwards our Lord instituted for the sacrament of admission into his church^r, and to seal to the members thereof the remission of their sins^s, the grace of the Holy Spirit^t, and eternal salvation^u. So that John's baptism was (in compliance with the usages of the Jews) only preparatory to our Lord's, who was to *come after* him, and to appoint such a baptism, that was to entitle them to the spiritual gifts, and to grace and salvation. Since water bath so naturally a property of cleansing, it is very plain and easy to apprehend it as a representation of the purifying of the soul: hence, besides the Jews, the^v heathens had their lustrations or washing with water, for purifying themselves. Furthermore, as a proselyte of the Jews, being baptized, was esteemed

^o Lightf. Hor. in Matt. iii. 6. ^p Gen. xxxv. 2. ^q Exod. xix. 10. ^r Matt. iii. ^s Matt. xxviii. 19. ^t Acts xxii. 16. ^u Matt. iii. 11. ^v Mark xvi. 16. ^w Dr. Spencer de Leg. Hebr. l. iii. dissert. 3.

by them to become a *new-born child*, and to have cast off his old relations²; so the Christian proselyte, being baptized, is said to be as one *born again*, to have *put off the old man*, and become a *new creature*.

The form of baptizing, at first, was by *going into* the water, or being dipped or plunged therein³, which was not inconvenient in the east, where the climate is warmer, and multitudes daily bathe in the rivers; but in our colder climates, a pouring on or sprinkling of water is most common. Sprinkling, or pouring on, in the Scripture, hath the term of baptizing given to it⁴; *the washing* (or, as in the original, *baptizing*^a) of tables or beds whereupon they leaned when they eat, that is, pouring water upon them, or sprinkling them with water, if any legally unclean person had touched them; and St. Paul interprets baptizing, by *cleansing with the washing of water*^b. The grace of God is not confined to the quantity of the water; but as a spoonful of wine in the other sacrament is as significant of Christ's blood as a whole cup; so sprinkling or pouring on is an application of water to the person baptized, as well as plunging him in a river; and sprinkling or pouring on is *baptizing* in the Scripture use of the term, though not after the manner of the eastern countries; and although the ancient Christians generally baptized by immersion, or dipping, yet in some cases they allowed sprinkling, as in case of sickness, and danger of life, or when persons were under confinement, &c.^c whereby it appears, that they did not understand being dipped or plunged in water so absolutely necessary, but that for proper causes, pouring on of water, or sprinkling, was sufficient.

² Lightf. in Joh. iii. 3. ³ Matt. iii. 6, 16. Acts viii. 38.

⁴ Mark vii. 4. ^a Βαπτισμους—κλινων. ^b Eph. v. 26. ^c Cyprrian, epist. 69. edit. Oxon. ad Magnum.

Fifthly, It was familiar with the people of the eastern countries, and the Jewish doctors in particular, to use divers *common sayings*, or *proverbs*; for example, they expressed the doctrine of wisdom and instruction by the metaphor ^d of meat and drink; and the receiving or entertaining such doctrine by eating and drinking: thus^e, *Wisdom orieth in the streets, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled*; that is, hearken to wisdom and instruction. Hence our Saviour exhorts^f, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life*, that is, by faith in Christ, and embracing his doctrine, to gain eternal life. Thus also they would signify a small quantity of any thing, by likening ^g it to *a grain of mustard seed*, which was noted to be the smallest seed in Judea, that produced so great a plant; for though it does not so with us, yet in the hotter climates, and particularly with them, it produced ^h great and high branches, like a tree; and therefore our Saviour spoke according to the common usage of the country, when ⁱ he compared the small beginning, but future increase, of the Gospel to *a grain of mustard seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown, it becometh a tree*. So also in the southern parts of America, there are mustard trees “higher than a man on horseback, and the birds build their nests on them^k.” Again, the word *paradise* signifies properly a garden, or delightful walks, and particularly the garden of Eden, where God placed our first parents before their fall. Hence it was used by the Jews (since the time of Esdras especially) for the happy and comfortable station of pious souls departed this life, till the re-

^d Grot. in Matt. xxvi. 26. ^e Prov. ix. 5. ^f John vi. 27.
^g Lightf. Hor. in Matt. xiii. 22. ^h Ibid. ⁱ Matt. xiii. 31, 32.
^k Woods Rogers's Cruising Voyage, p. 343.

sururrection¹. In which sense, Christ promised the penitent thief^m, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*; which no question the thief understood according to the common notion among the Jews; that is, not only to be remembered by Christ when he came into *his kingdom*, as he prayed to be, and to be happy with him for ever, both in soul and body after the resurrection; but in the mean time, to be in that happy state in respect to the soul, which the Jews commonly prayed for, when their friends were dying, *Let his soul be in paradise, or with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. Hence the primitive Christians had the same opinion of paradise; and it is to be observed, that our Lord did not promise the penitent thief, that he should that day be with him in *his kingdom*; for Christ was to ascend thither after his resurrection, and make way for all his servants to enter, in the same method in which he went before; but *the crown of righteousness*, the perfect consummation and bliss, is to be expected, when Christ shall invite at the great day, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom*ⁿ. Again, when the Jews would signify any thing unusual or difficult, they would say^o, "An elephant goes through a needle's eye;" which our Lord alludes to Matthew xix. 24.

Sixthly, Among the Jews, the man was wont to be *espoused*^p, or betrothed to his wife, some considerable time before he married her; during which time he might visit, but not lie with her^q. This explains Matt. i. 18. *Mary was espoused to Joseph before they came together*.

Seventhly, The Jews, in celebrating the great feast

¹ Lightf. in Luc. xxiii. 43. ^m Luke xxiii. 43. ⁿ Grot. in Luc. xxiii. 43. Bishop Taylor, Great Exemplar. part iii. ad §. 16. num. 1. ^o Lightf. in Matt. xix. 24. ^p Lightf. Hor. in Matt. i. 18. Leo Modena, part iv. c. 3. ^q See Deut. xx. 7.

of the passover, were wont to use some particular sacramental phrases; which both clear our Saviour's intention in instituting the Lord's supper, and explain to us the sense of some expressions relating to it; for instance, as the lamb is termed in Scripture the Lord's passover, though it was only the memorial of it^r, so they were wont^s to call the lamb then eaten, *The body of the lamb*; and to say of the unleavened bread, *This is the bread of affliction which our fathers did eat in Egypt*; that is, a commemoration, or representation of it. Thus Christ says of the bread blessed and broken, and of the cup, *This is my body, This is my blood*; that is, to commemorate and represent his body broken and wounded, and blood shed; that by duly receiving it, we may both make a thankful memorial and representation of his death and sufferings, and also be made partakers of the benefits thereof. Again, as the Jewish passover was a feast upon the sacrifice of a lamb, for a thankful remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt^t, so is the Lord's supper a feast, upon the *memorial of the sacrifice* of Christ's body broken, and blood shed, for a thankful remembrance of *Christ our passover's being sacrificed for us*, in order to our deliverance from sin, death, and hell. Hence it is, that as the eucharist, or Lord's supper, is a commemorative sacrifice, so the Jewish term *altar* is applied to the Lord's table^u. Further, when the unleavened bread was set on the table, the master of the house blessed God, *for having created the fruits of the earth*^x: so Christ took bread, and *blessed it, or gave thanks* for it to God^v. And as the master of the house *blessed God for the fruit of the vine*, when they drank of the wine, (thence termed

^r Exod. xii. 11.^s Ham. in Matt. xxvi. 26.^t Exod. xii.^u Heb. xiii. 10.^x Buxtorf. Synag. c. xviii. Lightf. Her. in

Matt. xxvi. 26.

^v Luke xxii. 17.

by them the cup of blessing^a;) so is *the cup which we drink*, called by the Apostle, *the cup of blessing*^b. And, lastly, as the Jews *sung an hymn of praise to God*, at their passover supper, *for his stupendous wonders*^c, so Christ, with his apostles, *sung an hymn* at the conclusion of his supper.

There is a seeming difference in the relation given by the Evangelists of the passover, which Christ and the Jews eat that year in which he suffered. St. Matthew says^d, that Christ did eat the passover the *evening* before his death; and yet St. John^e tells us, that early the next morning, *the Jews went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover*. Of this there are two accounts given; the one, that by the *passover* in John is meant, not the paschal lamb, but the *sheep and oxen* eaten all the seven days of unleavened bread^f, which was called strictly the *chagigah*, but in a general sense the *passover*, as making one part of the solemnity^g. The other account is, that Christ, the evening before his death, kept the passover in such manner, as the circumstances of his approaching death would allow; that is, by eating only the *unleavened bread, and bitter herbs*, (a part of the passover feast,) as it was usual for them to keep the passover at home, who could not go to Jerusalem^h. The former account is by many esteemed the most probable; because, when the disciples are said by St. Matthew to make provision to keep, and to *eat the passover*ⁱ, it should seem that Christ, who on all occasions exactly observed the law, did keep and eat it as it ought to be kept and eaten, and at the usual

^a Lightf. and Ham. on 1 Cor. x. 16.

^b 1 Cor. x. 16.

^c Buxtorf. *ibid.*

^d Chap. xxvi. 20.

^e Chap. xviii. 28.

^f Deut. xvi. 2. and 2 Chron. xxxv. 7, 8.

^g For which consult Lightf. Hor. in Joh. xviii. 28. and Dr. Whitby's Appendix to the Gospel of St. Mark.

^h See Ham. in Mark xiv. 12. and Dr. Wells on Matt. xxvi. 20.

time, as one of the ancients observes^k; which St. Mark confirms, when he says^l, that when his disciples asked him, *Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest eat the passover*, it was the first day of unleavened bread, at evening, when they (the Jews, according to custom) killed the passover; and the guest-chamber furnished at that time, and the hour being come^m, import the same; and that this was on Thursday evening, St. Paul assures, when he affirms, that Christ instituted the Lord's supper the same night in which he was betrayedⁿ, which is allowed to be at the same time when he eat the passover. What St. John says^o of the day when Christ suffered, *it was the preparation of the passover*, is understood to import only the passover Friday, or the Friday in the paschal festival, that is, the day before the paschal sabbath^p.

Eighthly, The Jews, in reckoning their hours, divided the whole time from the sun-rising to the setting into twelve equal parts^q, beginning their account from sun-rising. So that when the sun was in the equinox, and the days and nights of equal length, then their hours of day and night were equal too; and their first hour of the day was our sixth to the seventh in the morning, their second hour was our eighth, and so on; their sixth hour was our twelfth at noon, and their twelfth hour was our sixth at night; but when the days were longer or shorter, then their hours proportionably took up more or less time; still they divided the day, or time the sun was up, how long or short soever, into twelve equal parts: hence^r, *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* so that^s the eleventh hour was the last hour

^k Chrysost. in Joh. xviii. 28. ^l Chap. xiv. 12. ^m Luke xii. 11, 14. ⁿ 1. Cor. xi. 23. ^o John xix. 14. ^p As Mark xv. 42, the παρασκευή is the προεσκατον. See Dr. Whitby in loc. ^q Buxton. Synag. Jud. cap. 13. ad initium. ^r John xi. 9. ^s Matt. xx. 9, 12.

of the day, save one. In such manner they reckoned the night, or time between sun-setting and the next rising; so that the third hour of the night^t might be our nine at night, their sixth hour of the night at midnight, and so on.

They had also three other noted times in the day of going to the temple to prayer^u, viz. the third, the sixth, and ninth hours; the first and last were the times of offering the daily burnt-offering^x, viz. at our nine in the morning, and three in the afternoon. Each of these stated times contained the space of three hours; and that whole space was called by the name of the hour on which it began: as from the third hour of the day to the sixth, was the third hour of prayer, because it began at the third hour, or our nine in the morning; so from the sixth hour of the day to the ninth was the sixth hour of prayer; and from the ninth hour to their twelfth was the ninth hour of prayer; as in the following table.

The upper line is our account, the lower is the Jewish.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|----|----|--------------------------|---|---|----|----|----|
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Third hour of prayer. | | | Sixth hour of prayer. | | | Ninth hour of prayer. | | | | | |

There was also among the Jews another reckoning of their time, proper to be taken notice of, which is, that the natural day, consisting^y of one night and day^z, began with them at evening; so^a *the evening and the morning were the first day*, the evening being set before the morning, because

^t Acts xxiii. 23. ^u Grot. in Matt. xxvii. 45. Ham. in Joh. xix. 6. and Luke ii. 8. Dr. Whitby in Acts iii. 1. ^x Exod. xxix. 39. ^y Νύχθημερον, Grot. and Ham. in Matt. xii. 40. ^z As 2 Cor. xi. 25. ^a Gen. i.

darkness was in time before the light^b; accordingly they^c still begin their sabbath on Friday evening; the reason is, because they use the lunar year; and the new moon cannot be discerned but at that time. Now as other people, so the Jews were wont to express one whole thing by a part of it, by a figure frequently in use; and therefore any part of the natural day (consisting of one night and day) may express the whole. This explains the account given of the time of our Saviour's resurrection^d, that he was *three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*: now he was buried on Friday, and arose on Sunday morning, and so being in the grave one part of the first natural day, or evening and morning, which began on Thursday night, and ended with Friday evening, that is here meant for one night and day; the second is Friday night and Saturday; the third is Saturday night and Sunday; on the morning whereof he arose. By the same way of including the first and last day, we may reconcile Christ's bringing the three disciples up to the mount *after six days*^e, with his doing it *about eight days after*^f. For Matthew computed only the six days between the discourse of Christ^g, and his ascent up to the mount; whereas Luke included both that day of Christ's discourse and his ascension; and so they were in all about eight days. Lastly, We read of twofold weeks among the Jews; the one was ordinary, consisting of seven days; the other extraordinary, or prophetical, consisting of seven years; so^h Daniel's *seventy weeks* are seventy times seven yearsⁱ.

Ninthly, The Jews were wont to express them-

^b Ainsworth in loc. ^c Leo Modena, part iii. c. 1. and Mr. Ockley's notes thereon. ^d Matt. xii. 40. ^e Matt. xvii. 1.
^f Luke ix. 28. ^g Chap. xvi. at the end. ^h Dan. ix. 24.
ⁱ See also Lev. xxv. 8.

themselves by signs and actions, as well as words, (as hath been observed at the end of the first general rule for interpreting the holy Scriptures¹;) and particularly when their minds were disturbed, they were wont to express it by tearing some part of their garments; which action, though it may seem strange to us, was yet as usual among them as any other particular custom is among us; and so it was with some other of the eastern people, particularly the Persians². Thus when Jacob apprehended his son Joseph to be torn in pieces, he *rent his clothes*³; and therefore we find the high-priest to rend his clothes, when he thought Christ had blasphemed, in affirming himself to be the Son of God, and that he should come hereafter in the clouds of heaven⁴.

Tenthly, It was customary⁵ with the Jews to be called by a Jewish name among their own countrymen, and by another among the Gentiles. Hence we find Thomas called Didymus⁶, and Tabitha called Dorcas⁷, and Saul had the Roman name of Paul.

Eleventhly, The eastern people (of whom the Jews were a part) were accustomed to carry presents⁸ to the king, or any person of honour and authority, at the same time that they visited him, or requested a favour; that being esteemed an expression of respect, and accounted due on such occasions. Thus Jacob instructs his sons to carry a present to Joseph, when they went to buy food of him in Egypt⁹. Hence it was that the magi, or wise men from the east, brought their presents of

¹ Numb. xxvii. ² Grot. in Matt. xxvi. 65. ³ Gen. xxxvii. 34. See also Gen. xliv. 13. ⁴ Matt. xxvi. 65. ⁵ Lightf. Hor. in 1 Cor. i. 1. ⁶ John xi. 16. ⁷ Acts ix. 36. ⁸ See the Appendix, numb. 6. ⁹ Gen. xliii. 11. See also Gen. xxxii. 13. 1 Kings x. 2. 2 Kings v. 5.

gold, frankincense, and myrrh, when they visited Christ the Messiah, or King of the Jews¹.

Twelfthly, The disciples or scholars among the Jews were wont to sit at the feet of their teachers², while they were instructed in the laws and exercise of their religion; and it was a common saying among them, that a diligent scholar or hearer must be *strewed with the dust of his master's feet*. Hence we find the man, out of whom Christ had cast the devils, which had possessed him, being now in his right mind, *sitting at the feet of Jesus*, as being attentive to his doctrine³. And in this respect, Mary is said to *sit at Jesus' feet, and hear his word*⁴; and Paul was *brought up at the feet of Gamaliel*, and taught the law⁵.

Thirteenthly, The Jews, especially the richer sort, used to hire persons to make lamentation, at the death and funerals of their friends or relations; and that not only in voice, but by musical instruments⁶. Hence *the minstrels*, &c. at the death of the ruler's daughter.

They also buried their dead (according to the manner used in the eastern countries to this day^b) most commonly not in the earth, but in tombs or caves, and vaults, hewn out of the rocks^c. Abraham is said to bury Sarah his wife in the cave of Macpelah^d. In such a sepulchre Lazarus and Christ's bodies were laid^e.

Fourteenthly, God, having adopted the Israelites for his peculiar people, was pleased to declare him-

¹ Matt. ii. 11. ² Grot. in Luc. x. 39. Maimon. de studio legis, cap. 3. §. 7. edit. Oxon. Verba legis reperiuntur inter humiles, qui se pulvere pedum sapientum conspergunt. ³ Luke viii. 35. ⁴ Luke x. 39. ⁵ Acts xxii. 3. ⁶ Lightf. Hor. in Matt. ix. 23. ^a Matt. ix. 23. ^b Vide Appendix, numb. 2. ^c Lightf. Centur. Chorograph. 100. ante Hor. in Matt. and see the Appendix, numb. 2. ^d Gen. xxiii. 19. ^e Compare Bishop Pearson on the 4th Article, and buried, p. 221. John xi. 38. Matt. xxvii. 60.

self in a more especial manner their *Father*^f. Accordingly, in our Saviour's time, the Jews were wont to call upon God as their *Father in heaven*^g. In the same manner, Christ, who used to comply with the common language of the country, taught his disciples, being Jews, to pray, *Our Father, which art in heaven*. The Jews were wont to magnify themselves, especially on this account, that they, of all other people, were the sons of God^h. But now, under the Gospel, the Christians of all nations are through Christ the children of God by adoption; and therefore St. John declares, that *as many as received him, to them gave he power, or privilege, or dignity, to become the sons of God*ⁱ; and adds^k, *which are born not of blood, or of the posterity of Abraham, but of God*. And hence Christ hath taught us also to cherish our hopes in God, by calling on him in our prayers, as *our Father*; for though we are not of Abraham's seed, yet through Christ we are the *adopted* children of God^l.

Adoption is a term taken from the civil law, and signifies a person's taking the child of another for his own, to make him his heir: this being applied unto God, is a favour vouchsafed to the members of Christ's church, to be accounted the children of God through grace, which by nature were the children of (or subject to) wrath. Here also it may be further remarked, that as the ancient church of the Jews (or the body of that people) were styled the sons or children, so also the chosen or elect of God^m; *Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose, or elected, their seed after them*, that is, their whole seed, or the whole nation of the Jewsⁿ. Ac-

^f Exod. iv. 22. Deut. xxxii. 6. ^g Lightf. Hor. in Matt. vi. 9. ^h See Isaiah lxiii. 16. ⁱ John i. 12. ^k Verse 13.

^l Gal. iv. 4, 5. Eph. i. 5. ^m Deut. iv. 37. ⁿ So Deut. vii. 6, 7.

cordingly, the word *elected*, or *chosen*, in the New Testament, often signifies not any particular persons, (as some have mistaken it,) but the whole body or church of true Christians: thus°, *they shall deceive the very elect*, or true Christians; and^p, *ye are a chosen, or elect, generation*^q.

Fifteenthly, Among the many traditions of the Jews, one was concerning^r the vow of prohibition or interdict; as if a man having rashly vowed not to do such a thing for another, he was bound by that vow, however the laws of God command him to do it. Hence, if a son, out of rashness or covetousness, vowed, that whatever part of his substance his parent might stand in need of should be as a *gift* to God, that is, *Corban*^s, (which signifies a thing consecrated to God, and not to be employed in common uses,) their tradition was, that a son, having so vowed, might refuse to succour his indigent parents, lest he should become guilty of the violation of his vow. Hence our Saviour accuses them^t; *Ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free: thus ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition*.

Sixteenthly, It was customary over the eastern parts, and so among the Jews, for servants to wash their masters' feet after returning from abroad, to cleanse them from filth, (as it was anciently^u,) because in those hot countries they frequently walked with sandals, (which were soles tied on to their feet,) and sometimes with naked feet. This custom we read of in the times of Christ^v. And this office of

° Matt. xxiv. 24. ^p 1 Pet. ii. 9. ^q See Dr. Whitby in 1 Pet. ii. 9. ^r Grot. Ham. and Lightf. in Matt. xv. 5.
^s Mark vii. 11. ^t Matt. xv. 5, 6. ^u Gen. xviii. 4. 1 Sam. xxv. 41. ^v Luke vii. 88. Lightf. Hor. in Joh. xiii. 5.

washing their feet, Christ did for his disciples, as a servant, to teach them humility^y. Hence St. Paul reckons it as an instance of piety, *to wash the saints' feet*^z. The same usage still continues in the east; for when pilgrims^a arrive at Jerusalem, they are received with this kindness of washing their feet.

Eleventh remark. For the understanding of the parables, observe, 1st, That the way in which the Jewish rabbies and doctors instructed their scholars^b, according to the custom of the eastern countries, (observed by one of the ancients who lived therein^c,) was frequently by stories and parables; which set forth spiritual things under certain representations or similitudes taken from affairs and customs in the world. Thus, for example^d, one of the rabbies encourages a diligence in God's servants: "This matter (says he) is like unto a king, who invited his servants, but did not appoint the time. Those of them that were wise adorned themselves, and sat at the gate of the palace, to be ready; but the foolish went to their business. The king on a sudden enquires for his servants; the wise entered with their ornaments on, the other in a mean and indecent dress: the king rejoiced in the wise, but was enraged against the foolish."

Another of the rabbies^e teaches humility, by the following parable: "Three men (says he) were bidden to a feast; a prince, a wise man, and an humble man. The prince sat highest, next him the wise man, and the humble man lowest. The king observed it, and asked the prince, Why sittest thou highest? He said, Because I am a prince. Then he

^y John xiii. 5. ^z 1 Tim. v. 10. ^a Thevenot. Trav. part i. chap. 86. ^b Grot. et Lightf. Hor. in Matt. xiii. 3. ^c Fa-

miliare est Syris, et maxime Palestinis, ad omnem sermonem arum parabolas jungere. Hieronym. in Matt. xviii. 23.

^d Lightf. Hor. in Matt. xxv. 2. ^e Lightfoot's Harmony, Ann. 33. p. 49.

said to the wise man, Why sittest thou next? He said, Because I am a wise man. And to the humble man, Why sittest thou lowest? Because I am humble. The king seated the humble man highest, and the wise man still in his place, and the prince lowest."

After this manner, the Jewish doctors used to instruct their people, who had a kind of natural genius to that sort of discoursing. Hence our Lord complied with the customs of the Jews, and spake so many parables, which tended much to edification, of the Jews especially, who were accustomed to that method; for thereby the thing was shewed as it were in an image or picture; and the story delighted the hearer, and so the more engaged attention, and fixed the instruction: also a reproof found an easier entrance this way, than when offered in downright terms^f.

Secondly, Notwithstanding parables were thus suitable to the custom and temper of the Jews; yet Christ gives another reason for his speaking by parables to some of the people^g, because to them it was *not given*, or allowed, *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*; or^h, *that seeing they may see, and not perceive*. Not that they were unavoidably deprived of the means of conviction; for, first, most of his parables were intelligible enough to the well-disposed and attentive among them; of whom many became his disciples: but as for those that were *without*ⁱ, no better prepared to receive the truth than heathen persons, their own wickedness and perverseness was the cause of their not understanding them^k, because *they had not*, that is, were not disposed to

^f Thus Nathan reproved David, 2 Sam. xii. 1, &c. See also the parable of Jehoshaphat, king of Israel, 2 Kings xiv. 9. and of the vineyard, Isaiah v. 1, &c. ^g Matt. xiii. 11. ^h As in Mark iv. 12. ⁱ Mark iv. 11. ^k As it is more fully explained in Matt. xiii. 12.

improve the knowledge they had enjoyed; and *they seeing, see not*¹, that is, wilfully shut their eyes against the light. Secondly, The doctrine which Christ taught concerning *faith* and *manners* is very plain and evident; and if some of the parables were obscure, they are those which ^m contain *the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*ⁿ, which they might have asked him the interpretation of, (as his disciples did, and as scholars and hearers were wont to do.) These mysteries concerned the divine dispensation under the state of the Gospel, and the event of its institution, both among Jews and Gentiles; which Christ thought not fit more plainly to shew those, who were of such an obstinate and perverse temper, and came not with a sincere design to improve themselves; but discovered those mysteries to the apostles, as he did^o in the parable of the sower, shewing the effect which the preaching of the Gospel would have according to men's dispositions. So the wonderful progress of the Gospel, from so small a beginning, is signified^p by the strange growth of a small mustard seed, in the country of the Jews^q, above all other like sort of seeds. Again, the powerful influence of the Gospel on the hearts of men throughout the world is set forth, by the working and dispersing of a little leaven over the whole lump of meal^r.

Thirdly, The parables are to be understood as to the main design or scope^s of them, other circumstances being added to fill up the story; as the unjust steward^t is propounded to us for an example,

¹ Matt. xiii. 13. ^m Grot. in Matt. xiii. 10. ⁿ Matt. xiii. 11. ^o Ver. 18. ^p Ver. 31. ^q See the tenth remark on the Gospels above, numb. 5. ^r Ver. 33. ^s Maimon. in præfat. ad Mor. Nevoch. Sensus interiorem parabolæ, sub literæ externæ cortice latentem assimilent [sapientes] margaritæ pretiosæ, &c. et paulo post, Ubi tota parabola rem significatam totam exhibet, multa quidem habentur yerba, sed non singula pondus habent, verum inserviunt tantum ad elegantiam, &c. ^t Luke xvi.

not in the unjust part of cheating his lord, for that is only the filling up the story, but in using what of the world is now in our hands, with prudence for our future advantage; as that steward was cunning in making friends of his lord's creditors, by lessening their debts, and thereby provided for himself, that when he was dismissed, they might receive him into their houses; so we should contrive to make our worldly treasures subservient to our future benefit, by disposing a part of them charitably, thereby laying up beforehand a treasure in heaven. So again^u, Christ is compared to a thief, not in respect of theft, but the sudden surprise.

Fourthly, As for the expression at the beginning of most of the parables, *The kingdom of heaven is like*, &c. Here *the kingdom of heaven* signifies sometimes the Gospel of the kingdom, or the state of the Gospel, or the manifestation of the Messiah, and the success thereof; and sometimes God's dealing with men under the Gospel state; as^x, *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind*; that is, in the Gospel state, and at the publishing Christ the Messiah, many, both good and bad, pretend to be his disciples and followers, and are outward members of the visible church of Christ; but at the judgment-day they shall be distinguished. Again^y, *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, who would take account of his servants*; that is, God's dealing with man according to the covenant of the Gospel, is resembled to a king calling his servants to account.

Fifthly, Some parables are to be understood, not as having respect primarily to the case of particular Christians, but the calling of the Gentiles in general, and the rejection of the Jews; as^z the parable of the householder, that went out at the ninth and eleventh

^u Luke xii. 39. ^x Matt. xiii. 47. ^y Matt. xviii. 23. ^z Matt. xx. 1.

hour, or the latter end of the day, to hire labourers into his vineyard, seems chiefly to signify the calling of the Gentiles in the latter age of the world; and the complaint of those who were first hired, for being made but equal to them who were called afterwards, seems to point out the Jews being offended at their equality with the Gentiles in the dispensation of the Gospel. In like manner, the parable of the two sons^a may denote the state of Jews and Gentiles; the latter of which, although, like the prodigal son, they had cast off the true religion, and run into wickedness, if, upon the preaching of the Gospel, they repent and believe in Christ, even they shall be kindly received into the church, as well as the elder brother the Jew. And^b, the parable of the unthankful husbandmen, to whom a vineyard was let out, and who slew the householder's servants and his son, for which they were destroyed, shewed God's judgments on the Jews, who resisted and persecuted the old prophets, and even Christ the Son of God himself, that they should be cast off, and the kingdom of God given to another nation, *viz.* the Gentiles^c. So^d the parable of the persons invited to the marriage feast, who would not come, no doubt signified the Jews refusing the terms of the Gospel, and their rejection; and the inviting those on the *highways*, imported the calling of the Gentiles; though, in a secondary sense, these parables may be applied to particular cases and persons; as the rewards allowed to that person who came into the vineyard late, may comfort such to whom the Gospel was only revealed in their old age, and as soon as they are *hired*, or have the knowledge of the Gospel, *labour* in the vineyard, discharge their Christian duties: so the prodigal son's penitence and return, being accepted, may encourage the timely and true penitent.

^a Luke xv. ^b Matt. xxi. 33. ^c Ver. 43. ^d Matt. xxii. 1.

Twelfth remark. As for the *miracles* wrought by Christ; since no authority, inferior to that which formerly established the law, could be capable of repealing it^e, it was necessary that he should work miracles, who came to take down that way of worship, which had been at first settled by a power of miracles in Moses, that God might not be wanting to the faith of that people, who had received their law by signs and wonders from heaven; but that there should be as strong an evidence given to them, that the fulness of time was come, when that dispensation was to have an end, and to give place to another more perfect, which was to be established instead of it. We plainly find our Saviour very often appealing to his miracles, as the evidence of his divine commission^f; *If I had not done the works among them which no man else did, they had not had sin; that is, in not believing him.* Whereby Christ both sets forth the necessity of his working miracles, in order to the conviction of the world, and the greatness of the miracles which he wrought. He did those which no man else had done, no not Moses, or Elias, in curing all manner of diseases, by the word of his mouth. Again, the power of miracles did evidently declare that Christ was the promised Messiah, in whom the prophecies, concerning the miracles which the Messiah should work, were exactly fulfilled; as that of Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6. *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing;* and therefore it is observable, that of John the Baptist it is said, that he wrought *no miracles*^g; God reserving the glory of miracles wholly to the name of Christ, that the evidence of his being the Messiah

^e See Bishop Stillingfleet's Orig. Sacr. l. ii. c. ix. §. 2, 3.

^f John xv. 24. ^g John x. 41.

might be made more clear, by the miracles which he wrought; and that the minds of people might not be distracted between John and Christ. It may here be further remarked, concerning the miracles wrought by Christ, that there appears a difference between them, and those wrought by Moses; which last were, for the most part, of short continuance, and of a horrible effect; as the plagues in Egypt, and the punishment of those who murmured in the desert: whereas the miracles Christ wrought had a lasting effect, and were beneficial to men; as in curing their diseases and infirmities.

After what hath been remarked concerning the necessity of Christ's miracles, it should be enquired why he so often gave charge to *conceal* his miracles¹: *he strictly charged* the blind men, whose eyes he had opened, *See that no man know it*². This seems to be done not only to avoid vain-glory; but, 1st, he knew the malice of the Scribes and Pharisees, with the other rulers of the Jews; and that they would make an ill use of the accounts told them of his miraculous works, and be the more incensed against him, and seek the sooner to destroy him, (as we find they did upon their own seeing him heal the man with the withered hand¹;) but *his time* was not then come, and therefore he would have his miracles concealed from them. 2^{dly}, Another reason might be, to prevent the Jews from making insurrections, on pretence of his being a *temporal king*; for as such they expected their Messiah should appear, as it hath been observed before; but his *kingdom was not of this world*; and therefore, although he did enough to prove himself the Messiah, yet he would not have the effects of his mighty power so blazoned abroad, as to indulge the people in their conceit of

¹ Matt. ix. 30.

² So Matt. xii. 16. and in other places.

¹ Mark iii. 6.

his being such a temporal Messiah and King as they expected: thus, when *they would take him by force, and make him a king*, upon his feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, he withdrew himself from them, and *departed into a mountain himself alone*^m. For the same cause, he might charge his disciples, to *tell no man*, at that time, that he was the Christ or Messiahⁿ. Again, Christ's resurrection, and the attesting it by the powers of the Holy Spirit, was to be the last and most satisfactory proof which he thought fit to give of his commission, and to gain credit to all his former miracles. Hence we find him so often enjoining his disciples, not to publish his works till after his resurrection, and the confirming of that, by the undeniable power of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, who attested it^o.

Thirteenth remark. It was most requisite that Christ, as being our Mediator, should suffer death, if we consider him in regard to any part of his mediatory office; either, 1st, As a prophet, or teacher come from God, to confirm the truth of his doctrine by his death, and to give us an example of obedience to the will of God, and of humility and patience. Or, 2^{dly}, As a priest, to offer an acceptable sacrifice for the remission of sins. Now this was the notion of an expiatory sacrifice, both among Jews and Gentiles^p, (which made them the easier to understand the nature and cause of the sacrifice of Christ,) viz. that the sin of one person was transferred on another, or on a beast; who was upon that devoted and offered up to God, and died and suffered in the room of the offending person; and by this oblation, the punishment of sin being laid on the sacrifice, an ex-

^m John vi. 14, 15.

ⁿ Luke ix. 21.

^o Matt. xvi. 20. and

xvii. 19. Eph. i. 19.

^p Grot. de satisfactione Christi, cap. 10.

and see what has been said concerning the sacrifices under the law, in Part I. chap. 9.

piation was made for sin, and the sinner was believed to be reconciled to God. Now, on the one hand, it was not possible that the blood of bulls or goats should *take away sins*¹, that is, any otherwise than as being a type or shadow; and all that had the nature of man, besides Christ, had sins of their own, and therefore could not atone for others: wherefore, he being the only one that was partaker of man's nature, who had never sinned himself, and had united the human nature to the divine, (which gave a dignity to his sufferings,) was to *make his soul an offering for sin*², or to *die for our sins*³, whereby he made an *atonement* for us⁴, and became a *propitiation for our sins*⁵: that is, what the sin-offerings were to the Jews, a sacrifice to appease God's anger, and to render him propitious or reconciled to us. Though there was this peculiar in Christ's sacrifice, that he was both the priest and the sacrifice too.

Lastly, It was necessary Christ should die, that as a *king*, being afterwards risen again, he might conquer and triumph over death and the grave.

The particular death which Christ suffered was by being crucified on the *cross*⁶; which was a beam, or piece of wood, set in the ground upright; on which was another beam laid across near the top: the hands of the person that was crucified were stretched out and nailed to the cross beam, and his feet were nailed down to the other⁷. This was a punishment among the Romans for the highest crimes, and was esteemed the most painful⁸ death; insomuch, that in their language they called a most violent pain, a *cruciating*⁹, or suffering the cross.

¹ Heb. x. 4. ² Isa. liii. 10. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 3. ⁴ Rom. v. 11. ⁵ 1 John ii. 2. ⁶ Pearson on the Creed, Article 4. *was crucified.* ⁷ He who was to be crucified was nailed to the cross whilst it lay upon the ground, and being properly fastened to the wood, it was placed in an upright position. ⁸ Ibid. *Pœnæ extremum.* ⁹ *Cruciatius.*

It was also reckoned the most infamous death, and never inflicted on a free man, but only on slaves and fugitives; and therefore called, *the punishment of slaves*^b. Whereby it appears, that Christ hath undergone the most tormenting, and shameful, or accursed death; and hath thereby *redseeded us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree*^c. The providence of God hath been observed before^d in ordering it so, that Christ should suffer under a Roman governor, otherwise he had not been crucified; that being a kind of death that was never inflicted upon any by the Jews, but by Roman governors^e.

Fourteenth remark. Concerning Christ's manifestation of himself after his resurrection. The holy Gospel acquaints us, that the apostles saw him ascend up into heaven, but they did not actually see him arise out of his sepulchre: the reason is evident; for it was a sufficient confirmation of their faith in his resurrection, that they saw the sepulchre empty, and Christ actually appearing to, and conversing with them; but they were not to see him in heaven till themselves were admitted thither; and therefore they ought to behold him ascending, that they might evidence the truth of it to the world.

Again, Christ, when risen from the dead, and when he ascended into heaven, was not pleased to shew himself *openly to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God*^f. These witnesses themselves had sufficient, sensible, and frequent evidences given them thereof^g. But why did he not shew himself to all the people, especially the rulers, who, if con-

^b Servile supplicium. *Ibid.* ^c Deut. xxi. 23. Gal. iii. 13.

^d In the former part, concerning the government of Pontius Pilate, chap. 22. ^e Casaubon. Exercit. 16. Ann. 34. num. 92.

^f Acts x. 40, 41. ^g John xx. 19—30. and chap. xxi. Luke xxiv. 36—45.

vinced, might have rendered the truth of it beyond dispute? First, The chief priests and elders, with the other obstinate Jews, would not have believed in him, though they had seen him after he was risen, and when he ascended; since they could harden their hearts against his so many wonderful works, as if wrought by the prince of devils; and had consulted to put Lazarus to death, that they might stifle the belief of Christ's divine power in raising him from the grave^h. It was also requisite that our *faith* in Christ should be attended with some difficulty, whereby Christians might be the rather entitled to the glorious reward promised theretoⁱ.

But then it has been further objected, that if, for the reasons above mentioned, Christ would not shew himself to be alive again to his declared and prejudiced enemies, why not to some indifferent persons, who were neither engaged for nor against him. Now if such indifferent persons should nevertheless not believe his doctrine, they would not have propagated it, and so have been useless to the main design of Christ's confirming his resurrection: but if they should be convinced, then those who could do service to the doctrine of the resurrection, must be converts to Christ's religion, and therefore not indifferent, unconcerned persons: so that Christ chose the most effectual way; especially if we consider, in the second place, that the miraculous gifts, of speaking divers languages, and healing diseases, and the like, with which the apostles were endued after Christ's ascension, for a confirmation of their doctrine, were as evident proof of the truth of what they taught concerning his resurrection and ascending into heaven, as if Christ had personally appeared to the world; nay, in some sense more evident;

^h John xii. 10, 11.

ⁱ Ut fides, non mediocri præmio destinata, difficultate constaret. Tertul. Apol. cap. xxi.

for those hardened Jews, who should have seen Christ alive again, might have pretended to have seen his apparition, and not his real body, and so have verified our Saviour's saying, that they would not *be persuaded, though one rose from the dead*: but the many wonderful works, which were daily wrought by the apostles, in the most public manner, in testimony of the doctrine of Christ's resurrection and ascension, were the most convincing proofs of the truth of their doctrine; since thereby God himself did bear witness to it. To illustrate this matter a little further: we know, that too many have mistaken notions of the existence and the perfections of God; neither do they worship him suitably to his being; and yet, to prevent those evils, God does not think fit to manifest himself, after such a manner as perhaps some would fancy he might do; but having given men the faculties of reasoning and judging, he refers them to his glorious works, the visible *things that are made*, whereby that which is *invisible* may be *understood*, or *known of God*; so the visible confirmations of the resurrection of Christ, in the miracles wrought by the publishers of it, were the most suitable for conviction.

Fifteenth remark. There is often mention made in the Gospel, and also in the Acts, of the synagogues of the Jews. The word *synagogue* strictly signifies a place of meeting together for any purpose; but among the Jews, some think^k it was taken, (1st,) for the lesser consistory, or court of justice, appointed in each city^l, which had power, by the permission of the Romans, to judge and determine in divers causes or controversies between them, and to punish some offenders, who belonged to such a

^k Grotius and Lightf. in Matt. x. 17.
^l γῆρας is used in 1 Maccab. vii. 12.

^l As the word *syna-*

place or synagogue, by scourging^m. Whence they apprehend, that Christ forewarned his followers to *beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues*ⁿ.

But, (2dly,) others understand the term *synagogue*, in the common sense, to signify the place of public worship, and that^o our Saviour mentions the *synagogues*, in which the Christians were to be scourged, as distinct places from the *councils*, to which they were to be delivered, and that the scourging was wont to be actually inflicted in the synagogue^p, where they assembled for prayer and praise; and there are instances of that practice in the church histories^q; and one of the ancient fathers assigns a particular reason for this usage, *viz.* that the Jews did pretend, as it were, to “offer a sacrifice to the greater glory and praise of God, by punishing the apostles in the same place where religious worship was wont to be performed;” that is, in the synagogues.

The temple, which was but one in their whole country, (and that was at Jerusalem,) was the proper place of divine worship; thither the several tribes were to go up at least three times a year, (at the pass-over, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles;) there, and no where else, they offered sacrifice, and performed the most solemn offices of religion^r. But for the most common religious performances at

^m Lightf. Hor. in Matt. x. 17. and cap. iv. 23. ⁿ Matt. x. 17. So chap. xxiii. 34. Acts xxii. 19. Compare Deut. xxv. 1, 2, 3, and 2 Cor. xi. 24. ^o In Matt. x. ^p Dr. Whitby

(from Campeg. Vitringa. de Regim. Syn. vel. l. iii. pars i. cap. 11.) in Mark v. 22. ^q Which Grotius cites in Matt. x. 17. from Epiphanius and Eusebius, though he understands the text otherwise. ^r St. Chrysost. in Matt. x. 17. ^s A short

account of the manner thereof is given in Part I. chap. ix. in the description of the place of religious worship under the ceremonial law, *viz.* the tabernacle and temple.

home, (ever since their return from the Babylonian captivity,) they had *synagogues* dispersed up and down the whole country^t, and in other parts where they inhabited, if the place could afford ten persons who had leisure and capacities fit to attend the affairs of the synagogue, and study the law; and whosoever lived where a synagogue was, and did not join with the rest at the usual times, was esteemed a bad neighbour^u. In these synagogues they assembled three times each day (as hath been said above^x) for prayer and praise, and reading and expounding the law and the prophets. Those synagogue days^y were the sabbath, the second and fifth day of each week, answerable to our Saturday, Monday, and Thursday. In these places some were *rulers* of the synagogues^z, that is, presidents, heads, or masters, to whom belonged the chief care thereof: there was also the *chazan*^a (chanter or reader) to repeat or sing the prayers aloud, with whom the rest joined in a low voice: he also, or some other called upon by him, expounded the law to the congregation. Offenders, in some cases, were wont to be *put out of the synagogue*^b, that is, excommunicated, or excluded from partaking, with the rest, in the public prayers, and religious offices there performed^c; which exclusion was esteemed scandalous, and the person thereby reckoned *as an heathen man and a publican*^d.

Sixteenth remark. To avoid mistakes in reading our Saviour's sending his apostles, or other first publishers of the Gospel, we are to observe, there were two missions of them; the first was to the

^t Lightf. Hor. in Matt. iv. 23. and Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. x. ^u Lightfoot ibid. ^x Remark x. on the Gospels, numb. viii. ^y Lightfoot ibid. ^z Mark v. 22. Luke xiii. 14.

^a See remark x. on the Gospels, num. iii. ^b John ix. 22.

^c Leo Modena, part ii. c. 3. ^d Matt. xviii. 17.

Jews only, who were *the children of the kingdom*^c, the peculiar people, and to whom the promises especially belonged^d, and therefore the Gospel was first preached to them. The apostles were not *then* to go either amongst the Gentiles or Samaritans, nor make any provision either of gold or silver, or change of coats, &c. but depend entirely upon their Master's providence. Their commission was to publish, among the Jews, that *the kingdom of heaven*, the time of the Messiah, was at hand; and therefore, that they should believe in Christ, and receive him as such. The apostles were also to work miracles, in confirmation of their doctrine; and as they had *freely received* from Christ the gift of miracles, (of healing the sick, and casting out devils, &c.) they should *freely give* the benefit thereof to others^e. When the apostles had completed this mission, they gave their Lord an account of it^h. Their second mission was after Christ's resurrectionⁱ, and in this none were excluded, but they were to go and *teach all nations*, Jews and Gentiles, without exception of any, and to be *witnesses unto him, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth*^k. The latter part of our Saviour's instruction and charge^l seems^m most to respect this their second mission.

Seventeenth remark. This expression, *the coming of Christ*, or *the coming of the Son of man*, very often in the Gospels signifies his coming to execute that terrible judgment on the Jews, spoken of *before*ⁿ, and making the Romans the instruments thereof; and sometimes, his coming to judgment at the end of the world. The

^c Matt. viii. 12. ^d Rom. ix. 4. ^e For this first mission, see Matt. x. 5—16. Mark vi. 7, &c. Luke ix. 1, &c. ^h Luke ix. 10. ⁱ Matt. xxviii. 19. ^k Acts i. 8. ^l From Matt. x. 16, &c. ^m Grot. in Matt. x. 16. ⁿ In Part I. c. 22.

greatest part of Matthew xxiv. Mark xiii. and of Luke xxi. contains Christ's prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the dismal things which then were to befall the Jews^o; which he foretold at that time, when the Jews were in a flourishing state, and had no cause for such apprehensions, near forty years before the accomplishment. How much of those chapters last mentioned relates to the destruction of the Jews, and how much to the last day of judgment, is not plainly evident; because that destruction of the Jews, and the dreadful burnings of the city and temple, was a representation of the last day of judgment, therefore some think that Christ there speaks promiscuously of both: so that some things are to be understood of the destruction of the Jews, and others of the last day. But the words^p, *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled*, (like those^q, *Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom*,) seem fully to demonstrate, that all before mentioned was to be accomplished whilst some men of that age lived, (as the expression, *this generation*, is used to signify by the same Evangelist^r.) What follows^s may relate to the last judgment day, or *the end of the world*, concerning which the disciples enquired, as well as of the destruction of the temple^t. Those things which Christ foretold^u concerning the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, were fully made good; as Josephus, a Jewish writer, who lived at the same time, largely shews^v; and that so exactly, as

^o Grotius, Hammond, and Lightfoot in loc. compared with Dr. Wells's Paraphrase of the chapter. ^p Matt. xxiv. 34.

^q Matt. xvi. 28. ^r Matt. xi. 16. and xvi. 4. ^s From the 35th verse. ^t Verse 3. ^u From the beginning of the

chapter to the 35th verse. ^v Of the Wars, book 5, 6, 7. Of this at large in Part I. chap. 22.

if the historian had taken his measures as much from our Lord's prediction, as from the event; as an ancient Christian writer observes¹, "Whosoever does compare the words of Christ, with the relations of Josephus, of the whole war, he cannot but with admiration confess the divine and most admirable prescience and prediction of our Saviour." The aforesaid Josephus² assures us, that there were unusual *rumours of wars, dreadful famines and pestilence, and earthquakes, fearful sights, and great signs from heaven, many false prophets, and false Christs* arose, and *deceived many*; at length, *the holy place, the city of Jerusalem, was besieged by the abomination of desolation*, that is, the Roman army, so called, because the soldiers were idolaters, and had the image of Cæsar, and, for their ensign, the eagle, the Jews abominating all images. In short, the Jews were the carcase; the Romans, by reason of their ensign, were the eagles to devour them. This *great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning*, Christ describes in the language³ of the prophet Joel^b, which his disciples, being Jews, were accustomed to, and understood in the figurative sense; viz. by the *sun and the moon being darkened, and the stars falling*, &c. thereby signifying an utter dissolution and destruction. Lastly, Before this judgment was fully executed, the Gospel was published, Christ having sent his angels, or messengers, the apostles, with the trumpet of the Gospel, to *gather his elect*, among the Jews and Gentiles, in the several parts of the world^c.

¹ Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 7. ² Joseph. *ibid.* ³ See the fifth remark on the Prophets, in Part I. and Grot. in loc. ^b Chap. ii. 30. ^c See Lightfoot Hor. in Matt. xxiv. 31.

CHAP. IV.

THUS much for the general remarks, in order to the better understanding of the holy Gospels. As for the contents of them, we are chiefly taught in these books, *first*, How our redemption was accomplished, and what Christ hath done and suffered, and thereby procured for us. *Secondly*, What he expects as the conditions on our parts. *Thirdly*, What his own example was, that he gave us of an holy life.

I. We are taught in these books, how our redemption was accomplished; namely, that when the fulness of time was come, the Son of God took our nature upon him, being conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary; that his birth was manifested both to the Jews and Gentiles; and first to the Jewish shepherds, by an angel from heaven, a multitude of the heavenly host, or angels, praising God for it, and saying, *Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*; that he was called by the angel's appointment *Jesus*, which signifies a Saviour, because he was to save mankind; that he was circumcised in obedience to the law, and being presented in the temple, was, by a prophetic spirit, in Simeon and Anna, one of each sex, declared to be the Christ, or Messiah, before all the people; that his birth was manifested a second time, *viz.* to the Gentiles, in the persons of the wise men, who lived eastward of Judea^a, and who being used to contemplate the heavens, were guided by an extraordinary star, (a proper type of that light, which he was to bring to the Gentile

^a Probably in Arabia, whose inhabitants were esteemed by the Jews *the men of the east*, or the eastern people, Jer. xlix. 28. Pocock. Specimen Hist. Arab. edit. Oxon. 1650. p. 34. So the ancient Christians, vid. Grot. in Matt. ii. 1.

world.) These came to adore him, as the Messiah, or great King, which was then expected to appear by the Jews; from whom the neighbouring eastern people might learn the same. (This guiding those wise men, who were Gentiles, by a star, is called by the Church the *Epiphany*, or manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.) This occasioned Herod's jealousy, and resolution to destroy him; but he was (by an order from God in a dream to Joseph) conveyed into Egypt; whence, by the like order, he was conveyed back, after the death of Herod.

At twelve years of age, he manifested extraordinary wisdom, in hearing and propounding questions to the learned doctors of the Jews. After this, we have no account of him (except his living with, and being subject to, his reputed father Joseph, and Mary his mother, and growing in favour with God and man, and following the employment of a carpenter^b) till he was about thirty years of age^c. Then we read, that his forerunner, John the Baptist, who, though not the very person of Elias, (as himself owns he was not^d,) yet was the messenger that should take upon him the office of the promised Elias, (according to the prophecies^e,) proclaimed his approach, making thereby as it were the beginning^f of the Gospel state^g, and prepared the people to receive him, by *preaching repentance*, (that their sins might not render them unfit for the new state of the Gospel,) and *baptizing* the penitents, (since baptism was used by the Jews, as one method of admitting proselytes into their church.) When our Lord was baptized, the

^b Justin Martyr says, in making ploughs and yokes. Tryph. p. 270. Compare Grot. in Matt. xiii. 55. ^c Luke iii. 23.

^d John i. 21. ^e Isa. xl. 3, 4. Mal. iii. 1. and iv. 5. ^f Quasi non et nos limitem quandam agnoscamus Johannem constitutum inter vetera et nova; ad quem desineret Judaismus, et a quo inciperet Christianismus. *Tertull. adv. Marc.* l. iv. §. 33.

^g Luke xvi. 16.

heavens were opened unto him, (probably with a bright shining,) and the Holy Ghost came down in a visible shape like a dove upon him; and he was declared, before a great multitude of people who resorted to John, by a voice from heaven, to be the Son of God; whereby he was, as it were, installed into his ministerial function, and received the unction, or anointing of the Holy Ghost.

From that time he solemnly took upon him the prophetic office, and entered on the great work of our redemption. And first of all, he was carried into the wilderness or desert, where he fasted forty days, (as Moses and Elias, the types of him, were formerly enabled to do,) and being assaulted by the devil, he overcame all his temptations. Afterwards he went up and down the country of the Jews, testifying the approach of the Gospel state, or *the kingdom of heaven*, declaring the love of his Father, teaching his holy will, and giving an example of piety and charity; with assured promises of unspeakable and eternal glory and bliss unto all those who believe in him, and live according to his doctrine; and severe threatenings of eternal misery unto those who do not; he comforted the penitent, and encouraged them to come to him for ease of the burden of their sins; he confirmed the truth of his being the Messiah and the Son of God, by fulfilling the old prophecies, and by working miracles, as raising the dead, healing the sick, and casting out devils.

He chose twelve apostles, (which word *apostles* signifies messengers, or persons sent,) their proper and peculiar office being to be *witnesses* of what he did and said^h, and to publish the same afterward to the worldⁱ, and also to found or establish his church on earth, and to settle an order of bishops and pastors to succeed them in the government, and in-

^h Acts i. 8.

ⁱ Matt. xxviii. 19.

structing of the same^k. He chose twelve to be his apostles, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, most probably that the founders of the Christian church might be of the same number with those that founded the Jewish; and they were mean persons, as fishermen, neither learned nor noble, and so were the least prejudiced, and the more apt to embrace the naked truth, and the less liable to suspicion of inventing and forming a new sect and scheme of religion; but chiefly by their mean descent and education it appeared, that they were enabled to preach and work miracles by the power of God, and the assistance of the divine Spirit, (God having chosen *the foolish and weak things of the world to confound the wise, and things that are mighty.*) Farther, he foretold, his own sufferings, death, and resurrection; that his Gospel should prevail over the world; and that the Jews, with their city Jerusalem and the temple, should be shortly destroyed.

When he had near finished the work he had to do on earth, and the time was approaching for his passion, he made a public and kingly entrance into Jerusalem, (as it was foretold he should do,) riding on an ass, great numbers of people spreading their garments in the way, and otherwise honouring him as the Messiah, crying *Hosanna to the Son of David*; and then going into the temple, with authority, he drove out those who profaned it. The evening before his death, having given the necessary encouragement and promises of comfort and support to his disciples, at the celebration of the great feast of the passover, he ordained the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, for our solemn remembrance of his passion, and as a means whereby we receive the benefit of it; and

^k John xx. 21, 22. Acts xiv. 23. 2 Tim. ii. 2. See Casaubon, Exercit. 14. ann. 32. numb. v.

afterwards, having prayed to his heavenly Father, (instead of escaping from them, as formerly he did, his *hour* being now *come*,) he went voluntarily into the garden, where he foreknew some were lying in wait for him, there offering himself as a lamb to be slain for the sins of the world.

He suffered terrible conflicts and agonies, was treated with vile indignities and blasphemous scoffings, and was cruelly scourged; and at length, although pronounced innocent by the governor, was condemned, and underwent, for our sakes, the most bitter, painful, and shameful death of the cross; at which time the sun was eclipsed in an extraordinary manner, it being at the time of the passover, which was kept when the moon was fourteen days old; so it was then full moon, when there happens no natural eclipse, which is only caused by the new moon's being placed between our sight and the sun: then there was also as prodigious an earthquake^m, so that the graves of many saints were opened, and thereby a way was made to attend him at his resurrection: also, among other prodigies, the veil of the temple (which separated the highest and most sacred part of it from the rest) was rent in two, from the top to the bottom, (which no doubt was a token that God had put a period to the sacrifices and ministrations hitherto performed there.)

He was buried, and rose again on the third day after, and shewed himself to be alive at sundry times for forty days, often appearing to his disciples; and at length, in a solemn manner, with the sign of *breathing*, conferred on them the apostolical and ministerial commission of publishing the Gospel, and

^m Both which are taken notice of by the ancient astrologers and historians, Grot. in Matt. xxvii. 45. and Tertullian appealed to the records of the Roman empire for the eclipse, Apolog. c. 21. Eum mundi casum relatum in Arcanis vestris habetis.

establishing and governing his churchⁿ; and encouraged them with a promise of sending down *the* (gifts and powers of the) *Holy Ghost*, (which the next book of the New Testament, *viz.* the Acts of the Apostles, acquaints us how he performed, as we shall find in the history thereof.) In the mean time, they were to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit, which should comfort and teach them, and assist and support them in the discharge of their commission, to publish salvation unto all mankind, and to establish his church on earth: to which purpose, he gave them a soleinn command to go up and down the world, and to preach the Gospel, *beginning at Jerusalem*, or first to the Jews, and then to the people of all nations or countries, (whether Jews or Gentiles,) and to admit them into his church by the sacrament of baptism, and teach them to observe his laws, promising to be with them and their successors *unto the end of the world*; and, lastly, he blessed them, and ascended into heaven, there to be our Mediator with the Father, and to prepare a place of joy for us; in the mean time, governing his church on earth, with his holy word and Spirit, till he should come again at the last day to judgment, and conduct us into the kingdom of glory, and eternal life.

Note, That from Christ's birth to his manifestation of himself to the world, it was about thirty years, and from thence it was three years more to his ascension into heaven; so that he lived on earth in the whole about thirty-three years.

ⁿ See what is said on the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, concerning the effusion of the Holy Ghost.

CHAP. V.

The Condition on our parts.

II. **WE** are farther taught in the holy Gospels, that our Lord Jesus Christ, when he published his love in dying for us, did also declare the condition on our parts; and that is, not only to believe that he was the Christ and the Saviour, but also to take him to be our Lord and King, and to live in obedience to the divine laws. In Matthew^a we read, that *every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire*; and that it is not enough to call Christ *Lord*, to own him as our Saviour, unless we also *do the will of his Father which is in heaven, &c.* Now this heavenly will Christ declares and explains in his sermon on the mount, Matt. v. vi. vii. and in divers other places of the holy Gospel; which give us a true notion of the Christian religion, the design of which is to raise our souls above the sensual pleasures of the body, and the delights of this lower world, and to beget in us an heavenly temper, an inward purity of mind, and an entire conformity to the will of God. Here follows the substance of Christ's sermon:

I. ^b Our Lord pronounces divers persons *blessed*, in circumstances which the world has not such an opinion of; as, first, *the poor in spirit*, who, from a sense of their own imperfection, are humble and lowly minded; *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, they are fitted to receive and entertain the Gospel of Christ, and are better qualified for, and have the better title to, the grace and assistance of the Holy Spirit here, and to happiness hereafter. (This may

^a Matt. vii. 19, 20, 21. xi. 28, 29, 30. and xvi. 27.
v. 1—13.

^b Matt.

be applied to those poor in worldly possessions^c, who, because poor on earth, are the more zealous to attain heaven.) *Blessed are they that mourn*; by which we may understand, in the first place, those that mourn for their spiritual state, their want of true holiness and purity; and for their sins, so as to hate and renounce them for the future, contrary to the insensibility and hardness of negligent and presumptuous sinners. *For they shall be comforted*, by a reasonable assurance that God accepts their contrition now in this world, and in the next will receive them to everlasting joy. They are also blessed, who mourn in a Christian manner under afflictions, are patient and submissive when they are in a sorrowful state, (seeing it is the chastisement of God, who corrects, as a father his children, for their^d good.) *They shall be comforted*, with frequent refreshings and supports of the Holy Spirit^e; and at length be eternally comforted in heaven, in proportion to their sufferings on earth^f. In the next place, *Blessed are the meek*, the mild and gentle, who are of a calm and quiet disposition, *for they shall inherit the earth*; enjoy content and quiet in their minds, and so live as comfortably in the world as can be expected, whatever portion they may have therein; and hereafter inherit *the new heaven and the new earth*, which shall be revealed in God's due time. Farther, *Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness*, desire earnestly, and as earnestly endeavour to obtain such righteousness, whereby they may be approved of, and accepted by God, (as hunger and thirst inclines us both to desire and endeavour to obtain what will satisfy,) *for they shall be filled*, or satisfied therewith. Again, *Blessed are the merciful*; who are disposed in their minds to have pity

^c Luke vi. 20.^d Heb. xii. 7, &c.^e 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 5.^f John xvi. 20, 21, 22. Luke xvi. 25. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

on such as are in any want or trouble, (whether in regard to the body, or the soul, or their worldly state,) and actually express the same as opportunity is offered; and are also apt to forgive wrongs, and bear with infirmities; *for they themselves shall obtain mercy* at the hand of God. They are also *blessed*, who are not only outwardly religious, but *pure in heart*, whose consciences do not accuse them of love to any sin, are free from hypocrisy, and careful to keep their minds, which are as clearly seen by God as the outward actions, as free as possible from the pollution of evil thoughts and desires. *They shall see God*, (who is a pure mind or spirit himself;) they shall know his divine truths, and enjoy him for ever^s. *Blessed also are the peace-makers*; who are of a peaceable temper themselves^h, and easy to be reconciled, and are also ready to compose the differences of others; *for they*, by reason of their likeness to the God of peace, *shall be called*, or owned as, *the children of God*, and have their portion accordingly, of grace here, and happiness in heaven. Lastly, they are *blessed who are persecuted or reviled for righteousness sake*; who choose rather to suffer wrongfully out of love to God, and for a good conscience, (either in respect to the profession, or the practice of true religion,) than to save themselves by a sinful compliance. *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven*; they act as true members of Christ's church on earth, and their reward shall be great in heaven.

2. ⁱ Christ teaches, that as it is the virtue of *salt* to season food, and preserve it from corruption; so it is the office of the pastors of his church, and all other his followers, (according to their places and stations,)

^s 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. ^h So *pacificus* is a peaceable minded man, as well as a peace-maker. See Grot. in loc.

ⁱ Matt. v. 13—17.

to endeavour to season the manners of men, and keep them from the corruption and putrefaction of sin, by their good examples and instructions, or any other Christian methods; and to that purpose, although we are not to perform religious actions, which are of a private nature, (such as *prayers* in the closet, some *almsgiving*, private *fasting*, &c.) in a public manner, to gain applause to ourselves; yet the public actions and behaviour of Christian pastors and people should be to others as a *light* and encouragement to *good works*, and thereby a means to bring *glory* to God, (as by a religious behaviour in the public worship of God, by temperance, sobriety, chastity, justice, and fairness in our dealings, humility, meekness, charity, living in love, and doing good to others, &c.) since, by reason of our holy profession, we must expect to be taken notice of as *a city set on a hill*, and we should be as *a candle on a candlestick, that giveth light unto all that are in the house*.

3. ^k That no Christian may fancy himself freed from the observance of any moral duty, which God had enjoined of old, Christ declares, that he came *not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil*; and that not only by fulfilling what was typified and foretold, but also by explaining the full sense and spiritual importance of the moral laws; and chiefly in opposition to the false interpretations put upon them by the Scribes and Pharisees: we are not therefore to allow ourselves in a wilful neglect of what may be esteemed the *least* of God's *commandments*; much less teach others to do so too, (as the Scribes and Pharisees did by their misinterpretations, and in other respects,) seeing that neglect is an opposing God's authority, who gave such as are esteemed the least commandments, as well as those which

^k Matt. v. 17—21.

are greater; and so far are we from being made easier in the observation of God's laws, by our becoming Christians, that we are to take care, that our *righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees* of old, who considered chiefly the bare ceremonials of religion, and the external acts, with a neglect of the substantial parts of judgment, mercy, and truth; but we are to practise according to these last mentioned in the first place, though not to leave the other undone: we are also to exceed those Scribes and Pharisees, by not only complying with the bodily service, as they mostly did, but the spiritual, as being the great design and intention of the law; and not only being solicitous, like them, to avoid any open and known breach of the divine laws, but also the lower degrees of sin; suppressing all the evil motions and desires of the heart, and shunning all occasions, inducements, or temptations to impiety; otherwise we *shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*. As in the following instances:

4. ¹ We are not only to avoid *killing*, or murder, but also rash, unjust, and revengeful *anger* and rage; all disdainful scoffing, (expressed among the Jews by the term *Raca*,) and all bitter railings and reproachings, such as *thou fool* imports; and also all uncharitableness, envy, and variance; insomuch, that if our Christian *brother hath ought against us*, can justly charge us with any injury or wrong done to him by us, in his person, goods, or good name, we are to *reconcile* ourselves to him, and make him all reasonable satisfaction that lies in our power, before we can expect that God should accept our spiritual *gifts* and sacrifices of prayer and praise, &c. (because till that satisfaction be made, we still continue to be injurious, and so do not leave the sin, nor consequently truly repent, without which God will not

¹ Matt. v. 21—27.

accept us;) and this *agreement* and reconciliation with an *adversary* is to be made *quickly*, lest the present opportunity be lost, and the suffering be without remedy, and endless.

5. "We are not only to be free from *adultery*, but we are also to suppress any inward motion tending thereto, occasioned by lustful and wanton looks, *plucking out the eye, and cutting off the hand*, which causes to offend, that is, cutting off the occasion of sin; rather denying ourselves the use of our eyes, at such a time, than that they should ensnare us in sin by intemperate gazing. For, if there were no other way to avoid the being tempted, it were better to lose not only the use of these members of the body, but even the very members themselves, and thereby escape hell, and obtain heaven. We are also not to give occasion for adultery in a wife, by *putting her away*, because we are angry or dislike her, (as the Jews were permitted to do,) thereby causing her to commit adultery, either by exposing her to the temptation of incontinency, or of marrying another in her proper husband's life-time, contrary to the first institution of marriage.

6. "We are not only to avoid perjury, but also profane and common swearing, (as the Jews were wont to swear by *heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, &c.* which was all one as swearing by God himself, by reason of the relation those things have to him; they would also swear by their *head*, but that too is God's, and no man hath power to make the least change in it;) but we should, in our *communication*, or ordinary discourse, plainly affirm or deny, as the matter requires; for whatsoever is more than such, *yea, yea, and nay, nay*, or a plain affirmation or denial, *cometh of evil*, from evil causes, as dishonesty, falseness to one's word, &c.

" Matt. v. 27—33.

" Matt. v. 33—38.

7. ° However, among the Jews, the judges were, upon complaint made to them, to punish for the loss of an *eye*, or a *tooth*, by inflicting the like punishment upon him that did the wrong^p. Yet, as private persons, Christians should be easy to be reconciled, and *not resist evil*, or seek to have a person, who may have done him harm, to be punished in the same manner; but patiently endure affronts, nay, *turn the other cheek*, and part with a *coat or cloak*; that is, rather bear injuries, and venture further wrong, than oppose violence in such manner as the Jews did, much less, out of a spirit of revenge, and for the gratifying of hatred and ill-will, *recompence evil for evil*^q. Neither should we scornfully turn away from him that truly needs, and asks our kindness, but we must cheerfully succour him, by giving or lending.

8. ° We are (in opposition to the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees) to forgive enemies, and *do good* for evil; which is *perfect* charity; for so God, by vouchsafing the *sun* and *rain* to the *good* and *evil* too, behaves himself towards us; but if we restrain our love and favour to them only who *love* us, which even *publicans*, the worst of men, do, we can expect no *reward* of God: but our charity must be *perfect*, as our heavenly Father is.

9. ° When we give *alms*, or *pray*, or *fast*, we are not to do those good works in a more public manner than their nature requires, and thereby chiefly seek to be observed and praised of men, as the hypocritical Pharisees were wont to do; but to approve ourselves to God; and although we are to *continue instant*, or be frequent and much in prayer, so long as we are also attentive and devout; yet we are not to *use vain repetitions*, or a needless mul-

° Matt. v. 38—43. p Deut. xix. 18, &c. q Rom. xii. 17.
 r Matt. v. 43. to the end. s Matt. vi. 1—9. and 16—19.

tipling of words, (as they ^h who *cried from morning till noon, O Baal, hear us,*) as if God were ignorant of our wants, or slow of apprehension, or absent for the present time, &c. whereas the true God *knoweth what things we have need of*, and is inclined to do us good, on condition of our dependence on him, and devoutest prayers to him.

As to one particular here mentioned, *viz. fasting*, we may observe, that Christ supposes it a duty, though he does not expressly enjoin it, by condemning some abuse of it; so that, when fasting tends to the humbling and afflicting ourselves, in detestation of sin, or to the restraining our sinful appetites, and rendering us more devout and attentive to spiritual and heavenly affairs, then it is a necessary and religious duty; although the time and manner, and other circumstances of private fasting, depend on its being conducive to those ends and purposes.

10. ⁱWe are to use devoutly the Lord's Prayer, which himself hath taught us; and be as ready to be reconciled to others, as we ask forgiveness at God's hands.

A short Exposition of the Lord's Prayer.

OUR ^k *Father*, and therefore most inclined to do us good.

Which art in heaven; who rulest on high over all, and so art most *able* to relieve us.

Hallowed ^l *be thy name*; may thy glorious Majesty be above all things honoured and glorified ^m;

^h In 1 Kings xviii. 26. ⁱ Matt. vi. 9—16. ^k See remark x. on the Gospel aforegoing, num. 14. ^l *Hallowed* here signifies acknowledged or accounted holy; and thereupon our having a due reverence and veneration for God, and whatever more immediately relates to him. ^m The name of God signifies himself, and what relates to him, Psal. xx. 1. See the first general rule for understanding the Scripture, num. 20. (in Part I. chap. ix.)

and whatever more immediately relates to thee, be suitably regarded, by us and all the world.

*Thy kingdom come*ⁿ ; make all the world *subject* to thy Son Christ by the Gospel ; rule in our hearts by thy grace, and hasten thy kingdom of *glory*.

Thy will be done ; by our *obedience* to thy commands, and *submission* to all thy pleasure.

In earth as it is in heaven ; (though not so perfectly, yet as near as may be,) with that *readiness* and *constancy* as by the angels in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread : give, and bless to our use, the necessities of this life, from time to time.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Pardon our sins past, as we are prone to mercy and forgiveness towards one another.

And lead us not into temptation : for the time to come, suffer ° us not to be ensnared by temptations again to sin.

But deliver us from evil : from the devil and sin, and from all evil and mischief, from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever : all which we beg of thee, for thou art our King, and the power belongs to thee, and therefore all glory be to thee for evermore. *Amen*, so be it, good Lord.

This short prayer, we see, contains the substance of what we need ask of God, both for our souls and bodies, for this world and that which is to come : it was made by Christ himself, and therefore it is the

ⁿ The kingdom of the Messiah. See the second general remark foregoing on the Gospels. ° See the first general rule for interpreting the Scripture, num. 21. in Part I. chap. i. §. 9.

best, the most perfect, and spiritual prayer, the safest for us to use, and the most acceptable to God, when we pray to him in the words of his beloved Son. This prayer may be often in a day repeated by us, and that not only in the chamber, but when we are walking or riding; in the shop, or in the field: for it is Christ's command^p, that men ought always (or constantly) to pray, and not to faint, or be weary of this duty. But as we are to prefer this excellent divine form of prayer, and use it frequently; so we may also use other more large and special forms, both of public and private devotion, since there are so many particular occasions for the same.

11. To proceed^q. Great care must be taken, that, however we are to abide in our lawful callings, and may improve as well our earthly as heavenly talents, so far as is consistent with the duties of Christianity; and also are to be thankful for all conveniences of this life; yet that we are not to be most solicitous for the laying up *earthly treasures*, which are so fading and subject to casualties, but those which are *heavenly* and eternal: for *where our chief treasure is, there will our heart be also*. To this purpose, as we take care of *the eye, the light of the body*, seeing if it be faulty, the other members of the body cannot duly perform their offices; so we should take the best care we can, that the eye of the soul, the understanding and judgment, be rightly informed, both in the excellency of spiritual and heavenly things, and also in the value and use of the earthly; lest our whole desires and endeavours be after the latter, to the neglect of the only real treasures in heaven. For we *cannot serve, or cleave to, God and mammon*, that is, God and the world both together, no more

^p Luke xviii, 1.

^q Matt. vi. 19—25.

than one can *serve two masters*, whose wills are contrary to each other; God requiring us to love him with all our heart, to place our chiefest confidence in his power and goodness, to set our affections on things above, and attend most to the business of religion, justice, and charity; all which the world would keep us from.

12. 'There is no cause why we should be too *thoughtful* and solicitous, or immoderately concerned, for the things of this life; such anxiety is inconsistent with a firm belief of the goodness and providence of God, and betrays a distrust of both: it is God who gave us *life* and a *body*; and therefore will not deny us the lesser benefit of food and raiment, which are necessary to preserve them: it is God who supports all the meaner creatures, the *fowls* and plants, according to their natures; and sure he will not neglect us. Besides, we, who cannot *add one cubit* to our height or *stature*, cannot with all our solicitude provide for ourselves without God's blessing; which the Gentiles have not such notions of, and dependence on, as we have, and therefore they are more solicitous in seeking after earthly things: but our *heavenly Father knoweth* what is most needful and best for us. Not but that we are to do our duty in our lawful callings, but our first and chief aim should be to secure our interest in *the kingdom of God*, (the redemption of Christ, and the joys of heaven,) and for that end, to please and serve God, and then rest on his power and goodness for all necessary things of this life; so that there is no pretence for too much thoughtfulness and distrustful uneasiness *for to-morrow*, or the time to come; the evil or trouble of each day may be enough, without adding to it, by our being troubled beforehand.

13. *We should not rashly censure, *judge*, and *condemn* others, (for example, either from uncertain reports, taking words and notions in the worst sense, making no allowance for their ignorance, inadvertency, or being surprised, or determining of them from any calamity that befalls them, through the providence of God, in this world,) for by such rash judging, we shall bring upon ourselves the judgment of God: but we ought first to examine and reform ourselves; and when we have *cast the beam out of our own eye*, have amended our own greater faults, at least that may be so in God's account, (such as pride and arrogance, envy and malice, self-conceit and hypocrisy, being encouraged by unworthy motives to good actions, &c.) then we are the better fitted to *pull the mote out of our brother's eye*, to advise others to amend theirs. As for the stubborn and incorrigible, we are to leave them to God; for it is in vain to bestow our holy advice on such *dogs*, or *cast our pearls before such swine*, who usually *trample them under their feet*; do not profit by our kindness, but rather *turn again*, and mischief us.

14. †We ought to be constant and earnest in *asking*, that is, in prayers and devotions; God having mercifully declared that he will be prevailed upon by our importunity, to grant us what he knows to be good for us, especially on our prayers for *the Holy Spirit*, his gracious assistance in his service; and to make us the less fearful in this respect, our Lord appeals to our own judgment of the disposition of a *father* to his children; assuring us withal, that God our *heavenly Father* hath, much more than earthly parents, a fatherly kindness for us.

15. †Seeing God so deals with us as a kind Father,

* Matt. vii. 1—7. † Matt. vii. 7—12. † Matt. vii. 12,
13. compared with Luke vi. 30, 31, 32.

we ought to be followers of God, in our dealings one with another; which we may do, by observing carefully the reasonable and excellent rule our Lord hath given us, (in all our dealings, and in all points of justice and charity, and in all relations towards one another, as parents, children, masters, servants, &c.) viz. to *do unto others, as we would be content, and should esteem fit and reasonable, they should do unto us*, in the like case, if we were in their place, and they in ours; for this is the substance of our duty one towards another, contained in *the law and the prophets*; or the holy Scriptures¹.

16. "Notwithstanding the difficulties of a godly life, we are nevertheless to *strive* to walk in the path of religion, (which we may do through the assistance and grace of God, to be obtained by prayer,) though it may appear *strait* and *narrow*, by reason of our evil inclinations, customs, and habits, or the disappointments and sufferings we may be exposed to; and although *few* in comparison go that way, because it *leads* to eternal life; on the other hand, we are by no means, at any time, to run with the multitude into the way of impiety, though it seems *broad*, (most agreeable to our natural tempers and vicious inclinations,) and although *many* go that way, because it *leads* to hell and destruction.

17. "We are moreover to take heed to ourselves, in our searching after the narrow path of true religion and piety, lest we be seduced by *false prophets* or instructors into any error or sinful practice. Such usually appear *in sheep's clothing*, as very innocent and harmless, (making great outward shews of holi-

¹ That other precept in Matt. xix. 19. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, may be explained in the same manner, as teaching us to place ourselves in our neighbour's stead, and to express that degree of love and good-will towards him, as we might then expect from him. ² Matt. vii. 13—15. ³ Matt. vii. 15—21.

ness, devotion, and zeal for religion, and give smooth words,) but *inwardly are ravening wolves*, as being viciously disposed themselves, and having designs upon those whom they deceive, making advantage of them, and, which is worse, too often to their eternal ruin; but whatever be the outward appearance of such seducers, we may *know them by their fruits*; that is, not only their manner of life and conversation, (for they are said to come in sheep's clothing, as pretendedly harmless and pious,) but by the fruits of their doctrines, or those practices which their doctrines have a natural tendency to promote and encourage: forasmuch as it is inconsistent with the nature of God to promote or encourage any doctrine or practice which is not morally good, or which is morally evil, (which we may judge of by the light of reason, and the revelation of God's will in the holy Scriptures.) This care is more especially to be taken, seeing, as it follows,

18. ¹In order to our *entering into the kingdom of heaven*, it is not sufficient to make profession of Christianity, saying unto Christ, *Lord, Lord*; that is, owning ourselves the outward members of his church, and relying on him for salvation; but we must also *do the will* of God (by a conscientious discharge of our duties, as of the worship and service of God, and of justice and peace, and charity towards men, and sobriety and chastity in respect to ourselves;) and so far is this true, that although men may have preached to others, and might have *the gift of prophecy*, and a power of working miracles in Christ's name, they may be disowned by him at the last day, for their iniquity and neglect of holy living.

19. ²Hence it is, that whosoever *heareth and doeth* the will of God, is like unto a *house built upon*

¹ Matt. vii. 21—24.

² Matt. vii. 24. to the end.

a rock. Amidst all the *floods* and storms of temptations, persecutions, or other afflictions, and at the time of death, and the day of judgment, he shall stand firm in God's favour, and be happy for ever.

Thus much for Christ's sermon. There are many other lessons he has taught us, which are mentioned in several parts of the Gospel; such as these following:

^aTo be most afraid of offending God, who cannot only, as a man, punish *the body*, but also destroy *both soul and body in hell*.

^bTo take heed lest the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, *choak the word* of God, which we have heard, and hinder us from bringing forth good fruit.

^cThat seeing we expect forgiveness of innumerable sins at God's hands, we must be inclined to *forgive one another*, and be reconciled, even until *seventy times seven*; that is, after many provocations and injuries.

^dThat the *marriage* vow is to be kept sacred; because those two, the husband and wife, are by God united into one; and that nothing but falseness to the bed, which is a breaking of that union, can justify a *divorcement*.

^eThat it much concerns us to be careful, lest riches hinder us from *entering into the kingdom of heaven*; and to that purpose, not to *trust in riches*, so as to place confidence in, and to have too great affection for them; but rather *forsake all*, part with all our wealth in the world, when God calls for it, that is, when we cannot keep our wealth and a good conscience both together.

^fThat churches are not to be profaned, but used as

^a Matt. x. 28. ^b Matt. xiii. 22. ^c Matt. xviii. 21, &c. to the end, and Luke xvii. 34. ^d Matt. xix. 5, &c. to verse 10.
^e Matt. xix. 23. to the end of that chapter, and Mark x. 24.
^f Matt. xxi. 12, 13.

the houses of prayer, consecrated to God's honour and worship.

^sThat we detain not what belongs to God for the maintenance of his glory and service, nor be slack in paying tribute or taxes to kings and governors.

^aThat we love and serve the Lord our God very heartily and sincerely, with all our affections, and above all other things.

ⁱThat we should not be *vain-glorious*, hunting after praises, and affecting honourable places and titles; nor like those whom the Jews called *rabbies*, or doctors, and *masters*, who claimed authority and dominion over the faith of others, according to their own will, as their absolute directors; but we should instruct each other according to the doctrine which Christ, our only proper *Master*, hath established.

^kThat we should *watch*, and be on our guard, lest death summon us in an unprepared condition.

^lBy the parables of the *ten virgins*, and the *talents*, Christ teaches us that we carefully use and improve the present time and opportunity for religion, and the working out our salvation, and not defer it till it be too late.

^mThat giving meat and drink to the *hungry and thirsty*, succouring the honest and distressed *strangers*, clothing the *naked*, visiting and tending the *sick*, and relieving the poor *prisoners*, are such good works, as will be owned by Christ at the great day of judgment, as done to himself; and will entitle us to be invited with, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

ⁿThat the sin of omission in not relieving the

^s Matt. xxii. 21. ^a Matt. xxii. 37. ⁱ Matt. xxiii. 5—13.

^k Matt. xxiv. 42. to the end of that chapter, and Mark xiii. 33. to the end of that chapter. ^l Matt. xxv. 1—31. ^m Matt.

xxv. 34—41. and Luke xiv. 12—15. ⁿ Matt. xxv. 41. to the end of that chapter, and Luke xvi. 19. to the end of that chapter.

poor and distressed, &c. will certainly bring on us the wrath of God, shut us out from heaven, and be the occasion of our being condemned to the *everlasting fire* of hell.

^a That we celebrate the *Lord's Supper*, by a thankful remembrance and representation of Christ's love in dying for us.

^p From the widow's *two mites*, Christ shews, that where there is a little, something must be bestowed in charity; and that he will accept of alms according to the ability of the giver.

^a That when we have *put our hands to the plough*, have engaged ourselves in the service of Christ and his church, or in a religious course of life in general, we take great care that the profits or pleasures of the world may not call us off.

^r By the parable of the man that fell among thieves, Christ shews, that we must account any one as a neighbour whom we may be concerned with, as well as him that lives near us; and that we are to lay hold on every opportunity of relieving those that need our help.

^a That instead of the Pharisees cleansing of *cups and platters*, the giving alms is the Christian way to *purify and cleanse* the rest of our estates and possessions from what may be hurtful in them.

^t From the parable of the *rich man*, whose brains were contriving to build greater barns, when that night he was to die, and leave all, we are taught to be careful, that the love of this vain world may not disappoint and befool us, to the ruin of our souls.

^u When heavy judgments befall others, not to censure them as greater sinners than ourselves; but to look at home, and repent of our own sins, lest we *also perish*.

^a Matt. xxvi. 26—29. and Luke xxii. 19—21. ^p Mark xii. 41. ^r Luke ix. 62. ^t Luke x. 30—38. ^u Luke xi. 41. ^a Luke xii. 16. ^p Luke xiii. 1—6.

* Christ, by his acceptance of Zaccheus's restitution, teaches us, that we must *restore* what has been unjustly gotten. The reason is evident; because so long as, for want of restitution, we keep what is of right another man's, we still continue unjust; and so, by not forsaking the sin, we cannot be true penitents, and consequently have no title to forgiveness.

† Our Lord maketh it a peculiar character of his religion, that we *love one another, as he hath loved us*; which he calls *a new commandment*. Not but that the loving one another is a branch of the law of nature, arising from our inclination to society; in which there can be neither advantage nor pleasure, without mutual affection. Again, the loving one another was a precept of Moses, and that as one's own *self*². But then the Jews limited this to their own people; and had no regard to others, who were not Jews, or proselytes³: which occasioned the lawyer's question, *Who is my neighbour*⁴? Whereas Christ extends the command to all persons one may be concerned with, (bidding us to do as the Samaritan, a stranger, did to the man that *fell among thieves*⁵;) nay, even unto *enemies*⁶, and also proposes the measure and degree of love, in a higher manner than the Jews thought of; *as I have loved you*. Lastly, Christ might call this mutual love *a new commandment*, as, having made it the proper badge, or mark of the Christian religion; thereby distinguishing his followers from others; *By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*⁷.

‡ We must pray in the name of Jesus Christ, so our prayers shall be heard.

* Luke xix. 8, 9. † John xlii. 34, 35. ‡ Levit. xix. 18.

§ Grot. in Matt. v. 43. Lightf. Hor. in Luke x. 29. ¶ Luke

x. 29. ° Luke x. 29, &c. ° Matt. v. 44. ° Matt. xiii.

35. † John xiv. 13.

These, and other discourses of our Lord, we should often seriously read; being well assured, that as holy baptism has made us the members of Christ, that is, subjects of his kingdom; so unless we behave ourselves as such, in avoiding what is forbidden, and doing what he commands, we shall lose all the benefits of it.

CHAP. VI.

Christ's own example.

III. **FURTHERMORE**, as the holy Gospel gives us the account of what our Lord Jesus Christ hath done and suffered, and of what he hath required of us to observe and do; so also it acquaints us with our Lord's own example and pattern, which he hath given us, in the time of his public manifestation of himself: not indeed, where his acts were demonstrations of his divinity and Messiahship; as in his fasting forty days and forty nights, &c. but according to his ordinary conversation; as in the following instances:

1st, By a due retirement from the world sometimes, in order to our conversing with God, by divine meditations and devotion: but not by that sort of solitude, so much magnified in the Church of Rome, or an entire renouncing all manner of conversation with the world; but by a mixture of religious retirement, and the necessary, lawful employments of this life: for such was the pattern our Lord set us. Sometimes we read of him, as resorting to places of the greatest concourse; *the market-place*, and *synagogues*, and *feasts*⁶: and sometimes he retired into *a wilderness*, or *garden*, for religious and heavenly

⁶ John v. 1, &c. Matt. iv. 23. John ii. 1, &c.

exercises^h, and particularly for prayer and devotion in private; ⁱ *When he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray.* ^k *And it came to pass as he was alone praying.* And when the day was taken up in teaching and healing diseases, &c. rather than time should be wanting for his wonted devotion; *in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed^l.*

2dly, As for public devotion, his custom was to repair to the synagogues, where the public worship was wont to be performed^m, and to go to Jerusalem to the celebration of the great feastsⁿ.

3dly, Submission to the will of his heavenly Father, and patience under all crosses and pains, and all manner of sufferings^o. *O my Father, if this cup (of affliction) may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done.*

4thly, Peaceable subjection to the government where he lived; insomuch that Pilate having strictly examined him as to that point, (as it much concerned him to do, considering the jealousy and severity of his master the emperor Tiberius,) and heard all the malicious accusations of his enemies, while they accused him of *perverting the nation, stirring up the people, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar*; he was forced to declare, that he *found no fault in him, touching those things whereof they accused him^p.*

5thly, Justice in rendering to all their dues; so, rather than the accustomed tax should not be paid, and offence given in that respect, having no money, he wrought a miracle to procure it out of the fish's mouth^q.

^h Matt. iv. 1, &c. John xviii. 1, 2. ⁱ Matt. xiv. 23. ^k Luke ix. 18. ^l Mark i. 35. ^m Luke iv. 16. ⁿ John v. 1. vii. 10. and x. 22. ^o Matt. xxvi. 39, 42. ^p Luke xxiii. 14, 22. ^q Matt. xvii. 24, 27.

6thly, Love and charity to all persons, in every place where he came; *going about, and doing all good offices* for them, and refusing to note at any time, what might tend to their well being; but doing good both to men's souls, in furthering their spiritual and eternal happiness, and to their bodies, in relieving all that needed him; teaching us thereby that heavenly art of promoting the welfare of each other. A compassionate affection, and tender-heartedness towards all in their afflictions; and a readiness to bring them ease, is particularly exemplified to us in our Lord's behaviour. When he came nigh to the city Nain, there was a dead man carried out, *the only son of his mother, and she was a widow*, (two moving circumstances;) when our Lord saw her, he *had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not*; and having raised the young man to life, he *delivered him to his mother*. Much such another example we have in Christ, of a good-natured, kind, and compassionate inclination, and a real assisting the *distressed*. But above all, his love and charity was especially shewn in coming into the world, taking our nature, and dying for us. This example of his, himself urgeth us to follow, though not by any miraculous operations, or in so high a degree; yet to love and do good to each other, after such a manner *as he hath loved us*^a.

7thly, Humility or lowly-mindedness; he being content to come into the world in a poor state, and as meanly to live in it; being laid in a manger when first born, and esteemed afterwards no better than the son of a poor carpenter^x. This humble and lowly disposition is at all turns recommended to us, as a truly Christian one, by the apostles, teaching us

^a Matt. ix. 35. Acts x. 38. ^x Luke vii. 11, &c. ^t Mark viii. 1—10. ^u John xiii. 34, 35. ^x Mark vi. 3. and Luke ii. 7.

to be clothed with humility, and in lowliness of mind, each esteeming others better than ourselves; and that upon this principle, of letting this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant¹.

8thly, Meekness: in the midst of all the slights, revilings, and slanders of the Pharisees and others, though he could easily have revenged all their affronts, and have commanded fire from heaven, as Elias did, and as his disciples would have had him do; yet he still behaved himself gently and mildly, checking his disciples for their haste and passion, telling them, *Ye know not what spirit ye are of*; and declaring, that he was come to save, and not to destroy². This heavenly temper he also especially recommends to our learning of him, who was, in all his behaviour, so meek, and lowly, and gentle himself^a.

9thly, Obedience to parents: before he manifested himself to be the Son of God, he was subject to his supposed father Joseph, and Mary his mother after the flesh^b.

10thly, Contempt of this world, its vain profits and pleasures, in comparison with the next. This temper in Christ was a great stumbling-block or offence to the Jews, who expected the Messiah to appear with all the pomp and power of a great prince, and to procure for them, together with himself, the enjoyment of all temporal satisfactions and prosperity; whereas he accepted indeed the assistance of those who ministered unto him the necessities of life where he abode; and that was all the share he had of this world for himself and his disciples; calling upon us, in like manner, to come after him, and deny ourselves^c.

¹ 1 Pet. v. 5. Phil. ii. 3, 5, 6, 7.

² Luke ix. 54, 55, 56.

^a Matt. xi. 29.

^b Luke ii. 51.

^c Matt. xvi. 24.

11thly, Forgiving enemies, and being willing to be reconciled to them, and do them good : so Christ behaved himself towards his enemies, and prayed for them too : ^d *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

12thly, Patient suffering for well-doing : he often met with no better return, for all his acts of love to men's souls and bodies, than reproach and contempt, being charged with having assistance from *the devil*, in the mighty works he wrought, and with being a *friend*, or *favourer of sinners*^e ; and at last was rejected by the multitude, (who preferred a thief and murderer before him^f;) and then affronted, and derided, scourged, and crucified^g ; all which he endured with constant patience. To the imitation of which our heavenly pattern, in doing well, and suffering for it, his apostle tells us, *we are called, that we should follow his steps*^h.

Lastly, Suffering wrongfully for a good conscience, and righteousness sake. When he knew the Jews' intention to destroy him, he refused not to bear witness to the truth, *viz.* that he was *the Son of God*, and the Messiah ; though he also knew that confession was what they waited for, in order to pronounce him *guilty of blasphemy*, and consequently of *death*ⁱ ; teaching us hereby, that whenever the Divine Providence shall put us to such a trial, we also do, as our Lord and Master did, *witness a good confession*, and persevere in the truth ; and thereby *take up our cross and follow him*, as he calls upon us to do^k, that so one day we may also follow him to his glory.

Thus our Lord hath given an example of holy living : and it is our duty to imitate him, otherwise

^d Luke xxiii. 34. ^e Matt. ix. 34. and xi. 19. ^f Luke xxiii. 18, 19. and John xviii. 40. ^g Matt. xxvii. 26, &c.
^h 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20, 21. ⁱ Matt. xxvi. 63, &c. (as he afterwards did the same before Pilate, John xviii. 30—38.) ^k Matt. xvi. 24.

how are we his disciples, or followers, that is, Christians! to which character, a bare profession of his religion, without following him in practice, cannot entitle us. And how honourable is it to do as the glorious Son of God did! What satisfaction and comfort must it be to feel in ourselves such a temper as Christ had, to be employed as he was, to spend our life in such a manner as the blessed Jesus did his! And, as a farther encouragement, to be sure we are *in the right*, and do *walk in the narrow path*, when we follow Christ's footsteps, in whom the Father was always well pleased. So great reason had St. Paul to instruct every member of the Christian church¹, to *put on*, or imitate *the Lord Jesus Christ*; and St. John^m, *He that saith he abideth in him*, (Jesus Christ,) *ought himself to walk even as he walked*.

Thus far we have considered the chief contents of the Gospel; namely, that it gives us an account of *what Christ hath done and suffered for us*, in order to our eternal life and happiness; what he expects as the condition on our parts; and also, that it contains the example he hath given us of the performance of such condition, by a true Christian life.

CHAP. VII.

Practical Observations on the Gospels.

FOR the more profitable reading the books of the New Testament, it may be convenient to add some practical observations at the end of the account given of each of those books: these observations are such as tend to advance piety, and to prevent

¹ Rom. xiii. 14.

^m 1 John ii. 6.

some mistakes which are dangerous and pernicious. As to the four Gospels, the observations are these following.

First, As we read any part of the Gospel, we cannot but observe what a vein of love and kindness runs through all our Saviour's words and actions, both in respect to the souls and bodies of mankind: for instance, how kindly did he invite all that were heavy laden with the burden of their sins, or of their sufferings, to come unto him for ease and comfort! How forward was he, in his travels up and down, to heal diseases, to restore sight to the blind, and feet to the lame, *going about, and doing good!* How patient, in bearing with the sottishness and unbelief of his disciples, with the malice of the Pharisees, and ignorance of the people! With how passionate an affection did he pray for his disciples, and for all that should believe on him through their words*! How full of love was he even to his crucifiers, praying his Father to *forgive them*, and even making an excuse for them, that *they knew not what they did!* The very miracles which he wrought to prove his commission, and to evidence that he was the promised Messiah, were such as might shew not only power, but goodness and love; by such deeds as were most useful and beneficial to men: it might have convinced the world of his power, if he had caused a mountain to move from one place to another; but that would not have given them such instances of his love and goodness, as healing their sick, casting out devils, and raising their dead to life: and although he was often reviled and affronted, yet to manifest himself to be the Saviour, not the destroyer of mankind, he cured all manner of diseases, and raised the dead; but never inflicted any disease, nor took away the life of any man.

* John xvii. 9; &c.

Once more; Christ's forbearance of the Jews, for near forty years after he forewarned them of the dreadful judgments which hung over their heads, is not the least instance of his endearing goodness and love, in deferring their destruction so long, and sending them his apostles and teachers, and adding wonderful signs from heaven, foreshewing what was about to befall them, unless they repented. These and many other instances we may observe of our Saviour's love and tenderness, and good-will.

Secondly, That God chose such a method of being reconciled to sinners, as withal might vindicate the honour of his laws, and make us sensible of the evil and danger of sin, and of his love and goodness. The honour of his laws is vindicated, and the evil and danger of sin appears in that it was not to be forgiven without some sacrifice and expiation made for it; and we are made sensible of the infinite love and goodness of God, when we find that he *spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us*, to be our Saviour.

Thirdly, When we read in the Gospel the history of our redemption, in Christ's life and death, resurrection and ascension, and sending down the Holy Ghost, we may see how much was to be done, before we could be capable of salvation. Therefore seriously ask yourself, What will become of me? *How shall I escape, if I neglect so great salvation?*

Fourthly, We find in the Gospel, that it is in vain to hope in Christ as our Saviour, unless we also take him for our Lord and King, by *avoiding* what he hath forbidden, and heartily and sincerely *observing* the duties he hath taught, by his precepts and example. For it is evident, that (as God is a God of holiness, as well as mercy) one design of Christ's coming into the world was to suppress all sin and vice; such as injustice, intemperance, uncleanness,

profaneness, and such like ; and also other degrees of impurity, which may not be so visible to the world, and yet as opposite to holiness ; such as haughtiness and pride, passion, envy, and malice, ambition, covetousness, desire of revenge, &c. and on the other hand, to make men religious and virtuous, in the practice of piety and devotion, humility, patience, and meekness, sobriety, chastity, truth, justice, love, and charity, whereby we may *adorn* that excellent religion we profess, may *imitate*, and become the more like our heavenly Father ; and so *be the more in his favour* for the present^b ; and be *disposed for the relish* of those pure and spiritual pleasures, that are to be in heaven hereafter.

This appears from the whole scope of the New Testament ; in particular from our Saviour's first sermon^c, and his other instructions, which have been largely spoken of before ; and also in that discourse^d, where he assures all those, who can be *the branches of the true vine*, that they must be careful how they *bear fruit*, and *keep his commandments*, as ever they hope to *abide in his love*. The same doctrine the apostles took care to settle on the hearts of the new converts to Christianity : thus St. Paul^e instructed them in this design of Christianity ; *The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us how to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts* : and, on the other hand, *to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world* ; and then we may with comfort *look for the glorious appearing of our Saviour* ; forasmuch as he *gave himself for us*, yet not only to atone for the guilt, but also to prevent the practice of sin, and to engage men in an holy and religious conversation, that he might *purify to himself a pe-*

^b See Just. Martyr. Apol. 1. §. 10. ad initium. ^c Matt. v. vi. vii. ^d John xv. 1, &c. ^e Titus ii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

cular people, zealous of good works; and those who neglect the performance of this condition of salvation, or delay it so long as that they have neither due time nor ability to perform it, can have no other foundation for their hope than the uncovenanted mercies of God; and presume as unreasonably in regard to their everlasting concerns, as one that should slight all the methods for securing of his temporal estate, by the present settled laws, and wholly rely upon other laws to be made for the future, to confirm his title, which yet may never be enacted.

There are indeed promises, in the New Testament, of acceptance on condition of *repentance, and sorrow for sin*: but, 1st, many of these promises respected those who were newly called to the Christian religion, *viz.* the Jews and Heathens, as we shall further see in the Acts of the Apostles. These were to be assured, that their former sins would not exclude them from the new covenant of grace, made with mankind in Christ Jesus, on condition they did repent of them, and forsake them; and no doubt, such of them who departed this life, as far as they were baptized into Christ's religion, upon their sorrow for sins committed, and renouncing them, and a sincere purpose of obeying the Gospel for the future, were entitled to the benefits thereof; (as the labourer was rewarded, in the parable of the vineyard, who was not hired till the latter end of the day.) Hence St. Paul places the doctrine of *repentance from dead works, and faith towards God*, among the first principles of the Christian religion¹. But, 2dly, As for us, who are called into the vineyard at the beginning

¹ Heb. vi. 1. Hence, in the primitive church, the Catechumens, (or Catechizati,) on their faith and repentance, even though not baptized when prevented by death, were esteemed to be entitled to the merits of Christ. Firmiliani Epist. ad Cyprianum, epist. 75. prope finem, edit. Oxon. Augustinus de Baptismo, l. iv. c. 22.

of the day, who by baptism are so early admitted to be the members of Christ's church, and make constant profession of the Christian religion, we are required to labour, to live according to our profession, and that is, to renounce our sins, and to bring forth good fruit in all holy and godly conversation.

Thus much is evident from the Epistles of St. Paul especially, wherein he informs the first Christians, that they are now to be *dead to sin*, to *put off the old man*, and to *put on the new man*; that is, constantly to watch over themselves, and to resist the temptations to their former sins, and practise the duties of Christianity. They that hope otherwise, must believe, that God sent his Son to give us an example of an holy life, and to teach the practice of it, as we have seen, and yet that it will not signify much to those who rely on his merits, whether that example or practice be followed or no, or be rendered altogether vain.

As for the promises of pardon for sins committed, or omissions of duty, made to professed Christians, on their *repentance*, the great thing to be enquired into is, whether that repentance be sincere or no, *viz.* such as is suitable to the tenor of the Gospel; which consists in a present *sorrow*, and inward *change* of the disposition; and not only so, but a hearty *reformation*; and that whilst opportunity serves, and before the season and day is over. Such a penitent may comfort and encourage himself with that of the Apostle^s, *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.*

Once more; it may be added here, that indeed in the New Testament divers promises are made to some *particular* graces, or pious actions: as that *God is well pleased with the sacrifice of doing good*^h;

^s 1 John ii. 1, 2.

^h Heb. xiii. 12.

that we thereby are *laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come*ⁱ; that we are to *love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God*^k; and that *hope maketh not ashamed*^l; and such like. But then, what we are to understand hereby is this; that indeed such a single grace, or good action, does in a peculiar manner recommend us to God, yet is not alone effectual for salvation, unless in conjunction with other parts of Christian piety. This ought to be seriously considered; for St. James fully shews^m, that to fail, or *offer'd*, knowingly or wilfully, even in *one point*, is to be *guilty of all*; and consequently, one grace, or holy action, cannot make reparation for a wilful omission or neglect in other branches of our duty, much less for an indulgence in any allowed sinful course. So that, in short, doing good, and loving our neighbour, &c. are duties very acceptable to God, and have a particular promise of pardon for past sins annexed to the performance of them, and shall be particularly regarded at the last dayⁿ, which certainly is a vast encouragement. But they are not to be depended on singly by themselves, with a neglect of other parts of Christian behaviour: but where there is in general a *conversation as it becometh the Gospel of Christ*, or a sincere, true *repentance and reformation*, charity, and loving others, as being godlike qualities, have especial promises of acceptance, and of reward in heaven.

Further: The holy Gospel teaches us, that it is not sufficient that we abstain from debauchery and vices; such as adultery, drunkenness, lying, cheating, and such like; unless we also perform the duties which the Gospel requires: for, besides what hath been already mentioned, Christ hath not only

ⁱ 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

^k 1 John iv. 7.

^l Rom. v. 5.

^m James ii. 10.

ⁿ Matt. xxv. 14, &c.

declared against the commission of sins; but hath also forewarned us of the danger of the omission of duties; and observes to us, that not only *the tree which bringeth forth evil or hurtful fruit*, but that which *bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire*^o. And in the parable of the talents, he is that *wicked servant*, to be cast into *outer darkness*, not who abused his Lord's talent, for he hid it in the earth; but who did not use and improve it, was *slothful and unprofitable*^p. And in the account he gives us of the day of judgment, he shews^q, that those who neglect the works of mercy and charity, shall be sentenced to *everlasting fire*. Lastly, the Gospel not only requires the performance of virtuous *actions*, but likewise a watchfulness over the *inward motions* of the heart^r.

Here it may be requisite to mention the grand principles, or springs of piety, (both in mind and practice,) set forth in the Gospel; viz. the *love and fear of God*^s, and *the contempt of the world*^t. The *love of God*, as he is the chiefest good in himself, and the fountain of all the good which we do, or can enjoy, either in this life, or in the life to come; and the *fear of God*, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. This fearing of God is very consistent with our loving him; viz. as a dutiful son loves and reverences his parent, and, at the same time, fears to offend him, lest he lose his favour, and incur his displeasure.

As for *the world*; what is to be expected from it, beyond the present necessities of life? Not entire satisfaction; for the experience of mankind proves the contrary, and forces a confession, one time or other, that all therein is vanity. Neither can lands,

^o Matt. vii.

^p Matt. xxv.

^q Matt. xxv. 41, 42, &c.

^r Luke vi. 45.

^s Matt. xxii. 37. and x. 28.

^t Luke xii.

15—22. Matt. xvi. 24—27.

or money, remove trouble of mind, or infirmity of body: and at best, how short and uncertain are worldly treasures and felicities! So that nothing would more tend to advance religion, according to the principles laid down in the Gospel, than a serious contemplation on the perfections and benevolence of God, to induce us to love and please him; and on his justice and power, whereby we may be afraid to offend him; as also on the insufficiency and uncertainty of worldly satisfactions to wean us from them, and to make us *set our affections on things above*.

Fifthly, Every person, in order to salvation by Christ, ought not only to believe the Gospel, renounce the sins forbidden, and observe the duties contained in it; but he must also become an outward member of Christ's church, make profession of the Christian religion, and serve God in the public assemblies^u, and be partaker of the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; which Christ hath ordained to derive the inward and spiritual grace unto us, and to which he hath annexed the conveyance thereof; viz. of that remission of sins, and that reconciliation which he purchased by his death and sufferings, in that he hath made the holy sacraments the ordinary means whereby to convey an interest in his merits unto us; though not by any power in those means themselves, yet by virtue of his institution and appointment, and by the power of his Holy Spirit, moving and working in and by those means, upon all such as have suitable dispositions, and use them aright: as appears in respect to both the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper^x. So that although it be one design of the

^u Matt. xviii. 20. compared with Acts ii. 1. Heb. x. 25.

^x Matt. xxviii. 19. John iii. 5. Matt. xxvi. 26, &c. compared with Acts ii. 41, 42. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. and x. 16, 17.

Gospel, to teach men not to place religion chiefly in the performance of outward rites, (such as Moses taught the Jews,) but in the purity of the heart, and a holy life; worshipping the Father *in spirit and truth*; yet Christ hath thought fit to ordain a few plain and visible rites, (as Baptism and the Lord's Supper,) whereby men should be admitted into the visible society of his church, and become partakers of the spiritual benefits thereof; which therefore by no means are to be neglected, but reverently, devoutly, and thankfully to be used.

Nor ought it to be pretended, that because the Gospel requires inward purity, therefore the external ordinances were only *for a season*, and the obligation to them now ceases; forasmuch as we find nothing in Scripture concerning their being only temporary, and there is rather more reason for the continuance of them, than at their first institution, when the miraculous and sanctifying graces of the Spirit were so evident and common. So that, without being a visible member of the church of Christ, and making open profession of Christianity, frequenting the public assemblies, and partaking of the holy sacraments, the Gospel hath not promised us salvation by Christ. Where indeed these things are not in our power, there we may reasonably hope God will accept the will and resolution; for he hath not bound up himself to his own ordinances; but hath made them absolutely necessary as to us, when it is possible for us to observe them.

This ought to be well considered by all such who content themselves with a belief of the Gospel, and, it may be, a moral conversation, but wilfully neglect the forementioned ordinances of Christ.

Sixthly, Every true Christian must be ready and resolved beforehand rather to suffer, than disown Christ and his Gospel; or do, or consent to any

thing against the rules thereof; since our Lord declares^y, *If any man will come after me, or be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

Seventhly, We may do well sometimes to reflect on the reasonableness and perfection of the religion which Christ hath established^z; such as in the first place agrees with the reason of mankind; which teaches us to reverence and love God, the Author of our being, and of all our enjoyments, and to express our inward reverence and love of him by outward worship and adoration, to testify our dependence on him by prayers, and also to acknowledge our obligations to him by praises and thanksgivings. The Christian religion does also teach us the best methods for the government of ourselves, in order to our temporal ease, health, and happiness, by purity, chastity, moderation, and temperance; the contrary vices whereto are unnatural, unreasonable, and unhealthful: and likewise Christianity is available to establish true holiness, by teaching us how to purify our souls from the dross and filth of sensual delights, that provoke to covetousness, intemperance, and lust; which indispose a man for the contemplation of things spiritual and divine. Further, the religion which Christ hath taught the world does also tend to the peace and happiness of human society; than which end nothing can be devised more proper, by enjoining love one to another, meekness, justice, and charity. *Lastly*, This religion furnishes us with the best motives to patience and contentedness, under the evils and afflictions of this life, by propounding to us the example of the Son of God, and the glory and reward with which we shall be recompensed for ever.

^y Matt. xvi. 24. ^z This is at large illustrated by Dr. Hammond, in his *Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, chap. iv. and Archbishop Tillotson's *Serm. V. vol. i. in Phil. verse 8.*

Nor does the practice of the Christian religion deprive us of our temporal interests and satisfactions ; it does not oblige us to resist our natural appetites, but the corruptions of them : every man may enjoy the comforts of this life, provided he does not, for the sake thereof, unqualify himself for those of the life to come ; which being so abundantly more excellent and eternal, it is his greatest interest, as well as happiness, to secure ; as it would prove his greatest unhappiness to forfeit them, for what is so momentary and uncertain in this world. O how *excellent is the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord !* And how happy are we, and shall be, if we *do those things which we know*, so much tending to our present, future, and eternal good !

Eighthly, One branch of the new covenant, under the Gospel dispensation, is the blessed ^z operation of the Holy Spirit ; which being forfeited by our first parents' transgression, was graciously renewed by the promise of the Messiah, the *seed of the woman* ; and afforded to the prophets, and other holy persons under the legal dispensation, as it is now under the Gospel, by which Spirit we are *regenerate, or born again of water and of the Spirit*^a. This is explained by the apostle^b, *viz.* that Christ hath *saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit* ; the sum of which is, that sin having corrupted our nature, whereby our wills and affections are inclined to evil, ever since the fall of our first parents, we are therefore said to be *born in sin*, and to become the *children of wrath*, or subject to the wrath of God : but in our baptism, by virtue of Christ's institution, and the power and influence of the Holy Spirit, (which always accompanies his or-

^z Dr. Clagget has, among others, largely treated of this subject in his *Operations of the Holy Spirit*. ^a John iii. 5. ^b Tit. iii. 5.

dinances,) we are entered into a state of regeneration, or are spiritually new-born, are taken into covenant with God, and have an interest in the sanctifying graces of his Spirit, in order to holiness and salvation. Now the gifts and operations of the Spirit, expressed in Scripture, are twofold; the one sort *miraculous*, and peculiar to the apostles and first Christians; such as speaking with new tongues, healing diseases, interpreting the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, &c. for the planting and propagating the Gospel at the beginning, as we shall see afterwards: the other spiritual gifts are such as are *to continue* in the church. The former, we find by experience, are ceased; and therefore it is a gross and dangerous mistake in such, who confound those two sorts of gifts, and support their pretences to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, by promises peculiar to the apostles and first Christians. As for the latter sort of spiritual gifts and assistances, which are to continue in the church, these are promised on our prayers^c, and do both confirm a person in the state of regeneration or grace, and keep him so, except he *resist* and *quench* the Spirit, that is, either by *refusing* to do that good to which he finds himself to be strongly moved by his inward workings and persuasions; or *proceeding presumptuously* in any evil course, notwithstanding the checks and reproofs he feels within him.

The distinct peculiar *manner*, how the Spirit worketh in us, is not revealed, and therefore is not to be known by us; some have endeavoured to explain it, by God's raising such and such ideas in our brains, or making^d such impressions on our minds; for we cannot conceive him to have less power than he hath given to man, who can utter his mind in such man-

^c Luke xi. 13. ^d See the first part, chap. i. §. 4. concerning inspiration in general, towards the end of that section.

ner, as to be apprehended by another ; so God, who is a Spirit, can speak to the spirits and minds of men, as men can to the ear : but this we may be sure of, that his Spirit worketh in us in a way suitable to that reasonable nature which God hath given us, and to those faculties of the mind, and that freedom of choice, with which he hath endued us, as by inclining, convincing, persuading, &c. which is the method the same Spirit hath used, as we find in Scripture, *viz.* by arguments and motives to convince and persuade. There may be those who are more suddenly and powerfully wrought upon than others ; and they may know when and where they perceived a very extraordinary and strong impression on their minds ; which they may, not without just cause, believe to be the operation of the Spirit of God in their hearts : but, doubtless, there are many, who, by means of a happy education, in conjunction with the grace and Spirit of God, and an early religious conversation, with a constant progress therein, though they cannot point out the time and place of any such particular extraordinary impression on their minds, yet are truly regenerate, and led by the Spirit, and frequently feel the gracious influences thereof. The effects of a new birth, and the operations of the Spirit, are discerned by the holy dispositions wrought thereby on our minds ; for he *worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*^e. So we are said to be *led by the Spirit of God*^f. Nay, that we are *the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us*^g ; that is, as the Shechinal, or glory and bright shining, under the Jewish state, dwelt or resided in the temple of the Jews ; as a testimony of God's presence with them to protect and govern them. But then we are to guard against enthusiasm ; that is, the vain pretence of too many, who mistake the idle

^e Phil. ii. 13.^f Rom. xviii. 14.^g 1 Cor. iii. 16.

imaginations of their own brains for the dictates of the Spirit: nevertheless, their false notions of the Spirit ought not to discountenance our apprehensions of the true ones, no more than we should allow that there is no sound principle of law or physic, because of so many pretenders or quacks in both.

The *true mark*, whereby we may distinguish our own vain imaginations, or the suggestions of the devil, from the dictates of the Holy Spirit, (in which we are to be careful,) is the tendency of the motion or suggestion in our minds, *viz.* that it does not clash with any ordinance or appointment prescribed in the holy Scriptures, which has been revealed by the same Spirit; but is exactly conformable thereunto, both as to our profession and practice, and prompts and encourages us to the promoting of God's glory, and the discharge of our duties, or upbraids us with the contrary; and also, at the same time, works in our hearts humility in respect to ourselves, and charity for others; that in *lowliness of mind*, we may esteem others better than ourselves; and checks all spiritual pride, self-conceit, and disobedience to government in church or state; making us *endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. By these marks we may prove our inward motions: but without such examination and proof, too many wofully mistake the foolish and impious suggestions in their own minds, (too often the work of the devil,) for the true light and guiding of the Spirit of God.

The secret and gracious motions of the Holy Spirit in our minds are to be diligently attended to; being sometimes vouchsafed for the enlightening our understanding of the holy Scriptures, and our Christian privileges and duties, and for our encouragement therein^h; at other times, for supporting

^h Eph. i. 17, 18. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

and filling our hearts with contentment, and cheerfulness in troubleⁱ. One while checking us for any vice or neglect^k; at another time, creating in us a secret pleasure and satisfaction on our performance of an holy duty^l, raising more or less inward fervour, and spiritual joy in prayer^m, and frequently solacing the soul with a sense of God's favour, and with a lively hope of future salvationⁿ. And as we are to observe, and rejoice in those happy operations of the Holy Spirit, (as knowing, that the soul can no more live the life of righteousness without them, than the body can live naturally without food and clothing,) so we are to be on our parts careful that we may continue to enjoy them: but that we are not like to do, if we suffer the love of this world to seize our affections; for then we shall either be so drawn away with alluring sinful pleasures, or hurried with earthly affairs, that we shall forfeit those divine comforts and succours, and drive the Spirit from us: but the person, whom God takes into his special care, is he who keeps himself *disentangled from the snares of the world, and burns with desire after the love of the Lord*; and with a stedfast faith, and lively hope, lives in expectance of the heavenly treasures. To this purpose, the ancient author cited in the margin, and lately translated into our own language^o, is worth the perusal of every pious person; by the frequent reading of, and meditation thereon, he will soon find himself to be of that devout father's mind; viz. (in his own words,) "The promises made to us Christians are great, and beyond expression; insomuch, that all the glory and beauty of heaven and earth, with all the remaining furniture and variety, riches, splendour, and delight, of the visible

ⁱ 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 5. ^k Gal. v. 16. ^l Psal. xl. 8. ^m Eph. vi. 18. ⁿ Rom. v. 5. and viii. 16, 17. Psal. li. 12. ^o The Spiritual Homilies of Macarius the Egyptian.

creation, bear no proportion to the faith and treasure of one single soul." And therefore, since our heavenly Father has graciously promised the sanctifying gifts of *the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, we shall do well to ask the same, by the frequent use of that excellent Collect of our church; *O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guidance may perform the same, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen*^p.

Ninthly, That severe sentence, that *the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven*, was occasioned by the blasphemy of the Pharisees, affirming, that Christ wrought his miracles *by the prince of the devils*^q. Whereupon Christ declared^r, that although their blasphemous words against him might be forgiven, yet whosoever should blaspheme the Holy Ghost, (whose power now appeared by the works they saw, and who was to be sent down amongst them in a more ample manner afterward,) which was the last dispensation that God would vouchsafe for their conviction, and affirm the wonderful operations, to be wrought by the apostles and others, through the assistance of the divine Spirit, in testimony of Christ, to be the work of an evil spirit, thereby opposing and reproaching the goodness and power of the Spirit of God in effecting them, this sin should not be forgiven: so that no one who believes in Jesus Christ can be guilty of this sin, but he who blasphemously affirms, that the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, after Christ's ascension, into heaven, and the wonderful works wrought in testimony of Christ's being the Messiah and Saviour, were the work of the devil; and thereupon rejects the Christian religion, and the evidence thereof in

^p Fifth Sunday after Easter. ^q Matt. xii. 24. ^r Ver. 31.

the holy Scriptures; such resist their last remedy^a, and oppose the best and utmost means of their conviction; because such miraculous works are the utmost evidence that can be given to the truth of any religion, and, as hath been said, is the last dispensation which God vouchsafes for conviction.

Tenthly, As it is the common right of all societies to censure and exclude any disorderly member from the common privileges, without which fundamental power they cannot subsist; and as in the Jewish church there was the exercise of spiritual censures, to terrify evil-doers, prevent infection by evil examples, and to bring offenders to amendment; and thereby to maintain the credit and power of religion, by excommunication, or exclusion from sacred offices^t; so it was the universal sense of the ancients^u, agreeable to their constant practice, from the beginning of Christianity, that Christ committed unto the apostles, and in them to the bishops and pastors of the church, to the end of the world, an authority to establish a church; and for the government thereof, a power of exercising church-discipline, or of *binding and loosing*, of excommunication and absolution, for the ends and purposes above mentioned, (there being like to be always the same reason for discipline;) and also, that Christ assured the same to them, by that sacred symbol from his own mouth^x; *He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*:

^a Camero inter criticos sacros ad loc. Alloquitur dominus Pharisæos, qui patris œconomiam, quæ ante Christi adventum vigeat, insuper habuerunt; suam item blasphemantes spreverant. Ait ergo, licet œconomias illas, quamdiu duravere, contempserint; esse tamen spem veniæ, sub tertiam, quæ spiritui sancto tribuitur; sancti vero spiritus œconomiam si prosequantur odio, sublatam esse omnem veniæ spem, quia quarta œconomia minime expectari debeat. ^t John ix. 22. ^u Hammond's Power of the Keys, chap. 4. Cave's Primitive Christianity, part iii. chap. 5. ^x John xx. 22, 23.

whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained; and that on this principle, that as God himself is the Author of reconciliation, so he hath appointed his ministers to confirm the same as stewards commissioned by him; "as when a king sends governors over provinces, he gives them power of imprisoning and releasing;" according to the similitude of one of the ancients'. We may add here the remark of an eminent prelate of our Church to this purpose; "That act of ministry is not ineffectual, which God hath promised shall be ratified in heaven, and that authority is not contemptible, which the holy Jesus conveyed by breathing upon his church the Holy Ghost²."

Eleventhly, The pretence of the Papists, that the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, as being the successor of St. Peter, is the visible head of the whole Christian church on earth, and that whatsoever body of Christians do not submit to him as such, are no members of the Catholic church, is ill founded on Matt. xvi. 18, 19. *Thou art Peter, that is, a stone or rock, (for so the name signifies,) and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.*³

For this text does not give to Peter any peculiar authority over the rest of the apostles, because they were all of them rocks and foundations of the church, and had all the same commission given them, and the same power of *feeding*, or teaching

¹ Chrysost. in Joh. xx. 23.

² Bishop Taylor's Life of Christ, part iii. and §. 16. Compare Dr. Wells's Paraphrase on 1 Cor. v. And it ought not to be pleaded, that the power of remission of sins in the apostles was extraordinary, and for a time, as was that of miracles; because the church stands as much in need of it now, as in their days.

³ Catech. ad Parochos, para i. in Artic. Symbol. 9.

the church, as pastors of it, *of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sins*, or the power of the keys; as the texts below fully shew^b. And therefore, their pretence that the apostles were made foundations of the church in a different manner, that is, St. Peter as the ordinary pastor, and the rest only as ambassadors, is contrary to Scripture; and whatsoever our Saviour intended by that figurative expression, this is certain, that the *rock*, or real foundation, on which the Christian church is built, or the *chief corner stone*, is, according to St. Peter's confession, *Jesus Christ*^c. But the first person instrumental in building on this foundation was St. Peter, first among the Jews^d, then among the Gentiles^e. This matter of fact may explain our Saviour's promise to Peter, even supposing he means, by *this rock*, the person of Peter; but no superiority or power, or any jurisdiction over the rest of the apostles, or the whole Christian church, can be hence inferred; much less the succession of the Bishops of Rome in such an authority, any more than of those of Antioch, or any other place where St. Peter preached or resided.

It is also evident, that the other apostles did not, either from these words of Christ to Peter, or from any other cause, acknowledge any superior power in St. Peter; but acted without difference of respect or regard to him, more than to each other; as appears particularly in the case concerning the Gentile converts' obligation to the Mosaical law^f. So far were the Christians from appealing to St. Peter, as the judge in such cases, that they sent to the apo-

^b Eph. ii. 20. Rev. xxi. 14. Matt. xxviii. 16, &c. John xx. 23.

^c Eph. ii. 20. Which is the rock many of the ancient fathers mean. Forbesius Instructiones, Hist. Theol. l. xv. c. 7, 8, 9.

^d Acts ii. 14, 38, 41. ^e Acts x. 44, &c. ^f Casaubon. Exercit. 15. ann. 33. num. 17. §. 14. p. 366, &c. Camerarius apud Pool. Hammond and Whitby in Matt. xvi. 18. ^g Acts xv.

stles and elders in general^h, among whom the case was discussed, and at length determined; not by Peter, but James; *Wherefore my sentence is, &c.*ⁱ upon which it pleased (not Peter only, or as principal, but) *the apostles and elders, to send chosen men to Antioch*, with their resolution^k. Peter is indeed called the *first*, in reckoning up the twelve apostles^l; that is, in order, not dignity, or power: and the natural fervour and eagerness of his temper occasioned that his forwardness in speaking^m. Lastly, The plain matter of fact is this: the supremacy of the Pope, which the Church of Rome now challenges, was unknown for six hundred years, and then by degrees obtained in the Western church, not on the account of Christ's appointment, but the dignity of the church, and Bishop of Rome, which was the imperial cityⁿ.

Twelfthly, Those unhappy persons, who, being loth to quit their sinful pleasures, would fain comfort themselves, that so good a God will not punish them for ever for the sins of a short time, do befool and deceive themselves, in hoping to avoid what God has so solemnly threatened, and Christ has so mercifully forewarned them of, (as well as died to hinder,) the *going away into everlasting punishment*^o. Which is opposed there to the *life eternal*^p of the righteous; and therefore is to be understood to be as truly eternal, the one as the other; and the threatening is altogether as positive as the promise^q.

As for proportioning the time of punishment with that of the commission of the fact, what law is there

^h Ver. 2.

ⁱ Ver. 19.

^k Ver. 22.

^l Matt. x. 2.

^m Casaubon, Exercit. 16. ann. 34. num. 64. §. 61. p. 519.

ⁿ Irenæus, l. iii. c. 3. et Not. Grabii ibid. Bishop Stillingfleet's Vindication of Archbishop Laud, part ii. ch. 6. §. 11, 12. Dr. Cave's Government of the Ancient Church, and Dr. Geddes's Tracts, vol. ii.

^o Matt. xxv. 46.

^p Εἰς κόλασιν αἰωνίους, εἰς

ζωὴν αἰωνίαν.

^q Just. Martyr. Apol. 1. §. 12. et 66. et Trypho, edit. Jebb. p. 131.

which does not consider the nature and heinousness of the fact, not the longer or shorter space in which it was committed? God offers to our choice the joys of heaven, and that on condition of a gracious yoke, and a reasonable service; in which he is pleased to afford the assistance of his Spirit, and word, and sacraments; and *the everlasting fire was prepared for the devil and his angels*. So that if, after all means of salvation being afforded, any one should wilfully choose the devil's work, and unhappy share, the fault is in himself. As one short act of lust often ruins a man's health for his whole life, which is his *ever* in this world; and yet he cannot blame God for it, or expect he should deliver him by a miracle. Nor are we to separate the divine attributes of mercy and justice. In a word; since God has promised everlasting happiness on condition of our obedience, and has threatened everlasting punishment for the want of it; it seems to be his intention, that we should believe them both to be alike everlasting; and that we should make this use of the promise and threatening, *viz.* to consider, and endeavour how to escape the punishment, and enjoy the happiness. *Which God grant.*

Thus much for the holy Gospels.

CHAP. VIII.

The Acts of the Apostles.

THE next book of the New Testament is the Acts of the Apostles; which gives us an account of propagating the Christian faith and religion up and down the world, after Christ's ascension into heaven, by the apostles and their assistants. This book was also

written by ^aSt. Luke, the same who was mentioned before to have written one of the Gospels, (which he calls *The former treatise*,) and who was a constant attendant of St. Paul, whose actions he chiefly describes, as being an eye-witness to most of them. This history, from the beginning, was received into the canon of holy Scripture, as ^bappears from some of the most ancient fathers of the Church. For the better understanding this account in the Acts, of the first settlement of Christianity, we may make the following remarks.

First remark. The employment of publishing the Gospel was in itself very difficult and hazardous. The apostles were wont not only to convert persons of all countries and religions, but directly to oppose those opinions and practices, which the whole world, both of Jews and Gentiles, had for many ages been educated in, and with the greatest obstinacy received, and been accustomed to. They were now to cry down the necessity of the ceremonial observations of the Jews, as being only shadows of Christ the substance; and to *change the customs which Moses delivered* to them, and which they and their forefathers for so many generations had received, and were so zealously concerned for^c. They were also to oppose the Heathens, who were hardened in their errors and debauches, and even thought their gods were more honoured by their sensuality^d. Being thus to contest with the strong prejudices and passions of all sorts of men, they had need of being *endued with power from on high*; as we shall find they were, in the sequel of this history; which, if they had not been well assured of, it is not con-

^a Irenæus, l. iii. cap. 14. Dr. Mill's Prolegom, p. 13, 14. Dr. Whitby's Preface to the Acts, about the end.

^b Ibid.

^c See Acts vi. 13, 14. xxi. 20, 21. and xxii. 23, 23.

^d As in the solemnities of Cybele, Bacchus, Venus, &c.

ceivable they should have attempted to preach the Gospel.

Second remark. At the time of publishing the Gospel, the whole world was drowned in impiety, and fallen into all manner of abominable sins. The Heathens were all very sensible of their danger on this account: witness the sacrifices, wherewith they hoped to have appeased their angry deities. The Jews had sacrifices for sins of ignorance, and smaller transgressions; but the greater sins, as idolatry, murder, adultery, &c. were punished by death; and there was no provision made in the law to save such sinners^c. Besides, their legal sacrifices were only types and shadows of some more effectual one that was to come.

This being the state of the world, the apostles had a commission, with full power to invite all into the Christian church; that on condition of faith in Christ, repentance, and reformation for the future, they might be baptized, and made members thereof, and obtain remission of sins, in all cases whatsoever. So^f, *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* But they were also to declare, that howsoever God was pleased to *wink at the former times of ignorance*; yet now, since he hath given assurance to all men that Christ is the Saviour, he will be their Judge, in that *he hath raised him from the dead*; he hath, on their peril, *commanded all men every where to repent*^g.

Third remark. The obstinacy of the Jews, and their unbelief, were very much aggravated after Christ's resurrection, and his mission of the Holy Ghost. Those prejudices, which their whole nation

^c Numb. xxxv. 31. Levit. xx. 10,

Acts xiii. 38, 39.

^f Chap. xvii. 30, &c.

had entertained against his person and doctrine, though very unreasonable, (as hath been shewn^h before,) were yet an occasion of their unbelief. They knew that their law was at first established by signs and wonders from heaven under Moses; and they expected that the Messiah should be a glorious temporal King, and triumphantly subdue all nations under them; as we have seen before in the Gospels. Now that their law, given by God to their great master Moses, and confirmed by so many signs and wonders, was to give place to another dispensation; that they knew Jesus of Nazareth to be meanly descended and born; and that, instead of glorious triumphs and conquests, and a temporal kingdom, they heard him declare, *his kingdom was not of this world*; and saw him crucified, dead, and buried, whereas they expected their Messiah should *abide for ever*; this made them to be *offended*. But on the other hand, when, besides the miracles Christ himself wrought, in healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out devils, he was *declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead*; and when the truth of this was so fully evinced by the wonderful descent of the Holy Ghost on his disciples, enabling them on a sudden to speak all languages, and to do so many wonderful works in his name, and in confirmation of that doctrine; this fully answered their objections, and ought to have removed all their prejudices; by this they might have seen, that *all power was given to him both in heaven and in earth*; that a greater than Moses was here, and that God had *made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ*.

Fourth remark. Divers of the people of the Jews had been, for many years past, dispersed through several countries, and called *the dispersed among*

^h See remarks ii. and iii. on the Gospels foregoing.

the Gentiles^a, insomuch that there were *Jews in every nation under heaven*^a. And Josephus says^b, "the Jews were a people dispersed over all the world." These dispersions were first occasioned by the carrying away of the ten tribes into Assyria, whence they never returned; and after by the captivity of the two other tribes of Judah and Benjamin in Babylon; whence though the generality returned under Cyrus and his successors, yet divers settled there; for, many ages after, the posterity of the Jews remained in Assyria, Parthia, Babylon, &c.^c A great colony of them were by Alexander planted in his new city, that he built in Egypt^d, (and which he named Alexandria,) as we have seen before. After Alexander's death, Ptolemy, surnamed Soter, having surprised Jerusalem on a sabbath day, settled another great colony of the Jews in Egypt^e, particularly in Alexandria; where, in confidence of their fidelity to him, he allowed them great privileges, which, together with the convenience of a fruitful country, allured vast numbers of them to fix in Egypt. Further, the Jews had been dispersed in Syria, the Lesser Asia, Greece, Italy, and elsewhere; for Jews, as well as proselytes, are said to come from the several countries mentioned^f. Many of the latter dispersions might be occasioned, partly through business, and also by the tyrannies of Antiochus, before mentioned; and after by Pompey, and the Roman soldiers.

Now, where the Jews settled in great towns, they were allowed to have their synagogues, or places for

^a John vii. 35. ^a Acts ii. 5, 10. ^b That is, chiefly all countries then in subjection to the Romans, *κατα πασας την οικου-
μενην*, de Bello, l. vii. chap. 21. ^c Insomuch that Josephus

mentions the Jews of his time, "on the other side of Euphrates, and in Adiabena," (which is in Assyria.) Preface to the Wars, and near the end of Agrippa's Speech. Wars, book ii. chap. 16.

^d Idem Wars, book ii. chap. 21. ^e Idem Antiq. book xii. chap. 1. ^f Acts ii. 9, 10. see also 1 Pet. i. 1. Acts xi. 19.

their public worship^s. So that the apostles, and first preachers of the Gospel, (especially St. Paul,) finding some Jews, more or less, in most cities or countries whither they went, they betook themselves to the Jews in the first place, and afterwards to the Gentiles^h; and thus may the question be answered, which perhaps some raise in reading the New Testament, how the Jews are so often mentioned out of their own country.

Fifth remark. The providence of God is to be observed at this time, in disposing the affairs of the world so, as that the Gospel might be the easier propagated; and that in two respects; first, by the above-mentioned dispersions of the Jews among the Gentiles, several of the Gentiles became proselytesⁱ, of which some entirely embraced the Jewish religion, and others were also admitted to the worship of the true God^k, and so by frequenting their synagogues, where the Old Testament was wont to be read and interpreted, they were by degrees acquainted with the holy Scriptures, and the types and prophecies concerning Christ the Messiah: herein they were all much assisted by the translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Greek, called the Septuagint, spoken of before. For the Greek language, in general, and this translation, was much used^l at this time by the dispersed Jews and proselytes; because after the enlargement of the Macedonian or Grecian empire, the Greek language became familiar to the Jews and neighbouring countries: hence the New Testament was written in Greek, and a great many expressions therein are taken from the aforesaid translation of the Septuagint, which was so much in use.

^s Acts ix. 2. xiii. 14. and xviii. 24, 26. ^h See Acts xiii. 46. and xviii. 5, 6. ⁱ See remark iii. on the Gospels, num. iv. concerning proselytes. ^k Acts ii. 10. and xiii. 43. ^l Grot. in Matt. xxvii. 37. Lightfoot's Harmony, sub an. 62. p. 340.

In the second place, the Gospel was more easily propagated, because very many countries were at this time united under one government, that of the Romans; so that there was an universal peace, which opened a way for the apostles, and first preachers of Christianity, with the greater ease and security, to plant the Gospel in the several parts of the world.

Sixth remark. The persecutions which the church of Christ underwent were occasioned chiefly by the unbelieving Jews: their enmity arose in part from the prejudice they had conceived against Christ himself, in respect to the meanness of his outward appearance, his exposing their hypocrisies, and wrong notions^m, and partly out of a mistaken zeal for the law of Moses, which had been established by God with such signs from heaven, and which they presumed was to remain unalterableⁿ; and, lastly, through envy to the Gentiles, that they should be taken into covenant with God, as well as themselves^o. On these accounts principally, the Jews were not satisfied with having procured the death of Christ, but continued their hatred of, and violent opposition to, the doctrine of Christianity, and the professors of it, especially the Jews, (their own countrymen,) who were believers; whom they persecuted both in Judea, and in other countries, through the assistance or connivance of the Roman power^p.

The Jews pretended that the Christian were *movers of sedition*^q, and had treasonable designs against the empire, in making Christ a king; and so did *contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, that there is*

^m For which see remarks ii. iii. on the Gospels. ⁿ For which see what hath been said on the Pentateuch, concerning the ceremonial law. ^o Of which at large in the following history of the Acts, concerning the conversion of the Gentiles.

^p See Acts xiv. 2, 19. xvii. 5, 7, 13. xviii. 12. and xx. 19. Compare Rom. xv. 31. and 1 Thess. ii. 14, 15. ^q Acts xxiv. 5.

another king, one Jesus^r; because they owned him for the Messiah, and called him Lord, and hoped for a kingdom in heaven^s, (the same they had suggested before against Christ himself^t.) Nay, so far did the malice of the unbelieving Jews proceed, as that, having first ordered that Jesus Christ, and those who believed in him, should be solemnly pronounced accursed in their synagogues^u, they sent from Jerusalem, into all other countries, certain chosen persons, on purpose to spread false and scandalous reports concerning the religion of the Christians, representing them as guilty of atheism, and all manner of impiety, to make them odious to all mankind^v.

Here, by the way, we may take notice, that the Jews expressed the like hatred against the Christians, and oppressed them in the following centuries. The Christians at Smyrna, in their Epistle concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp^w, speaking of the multitude's getting faggots to burn him, they add, "The Jews especially, according to their custom, with all readiness assisting them in it." In Justin Martyr's time, about the year 140, their custom was not only, as hath been said, solemnly to curse the Christians in their synagogues, but to persecute them more than any other ever attempted to do^x: nay, even in the reign of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, they were wont not only by all means to afflict, but even stone those of their own people who were converted to Christianity; insomuch that the emperor was obliged to make the most severe laws to prevent

^r In the same manner the Christians were accused about a hundred years afterwards. Just. Martyr. Apol. 1. §. 11. edit. Grab. ^s Acts xvii. 7. ^t Luke xxiii. 2. ^u Just. Mart. Dialog. cum Tryphone, edit. Jebb. p. 50. et 385. (And this accursing of Christ and Christians they continue in their pass-over feasts. Buxtorf. Synag. c. 19. prope dimidium.) ^v Just. Mart. *ibid.* p. 52. and 317. and note *ibid.* ^w Num. xiii. ^x Just. Mart. *ibid.* p. 52.

it, and to threaten them with being burnt to death if they persisted^y; and in the fourth century, they were the chief authors of a most violent persecution of the Christians in Persia, under Saporess, king thereof; which extended to the martyrdom of the Christian bishops and priests, and the demolishing of the churches. This persecution they procured, by falsely suggesting to the Persian king, (who it seems was at variance with the Roman emperor,) that Simeon, the Christian bishop in Persia, held a treasonable correspondence with the emperor,) and betrayed the Persian counsels to him^z; and some time after this, under pretence of a Christian church being on fire in the night, they surprised and murdered a great number of Christians in Alexandria^a.

Lastly, St. Jerome, about the same time, informs us, that the Jews were wont three times a day, in all their synagogues, to curse the very name of Christians, under the title of Nazarenes^b. And as this usage of their cursing Christians continues, so they abuse to that purpose^c.

Having made this short digression, (which may somewhat illustrate the opposition which the Jews made against Christianity at the first,) we may observe further, that, besides the spiteful suggestions and malice of the Jews, there were other reasons for the oppositions made against the Christian religion, and the professors and preachers of it, by the Roman powers, and other Gentiles.

1st, These considered their own religion as the religion of their ancestors, and of their country, which their forefathers had a long time professed and practised; and so, instead of enquiring into the

^y Codex de Judæis apud Centuriatores. Centuria iv. p. 850. E.

^z Sozom. Hist. l. ii. cap. 8.

^a Socrates Hist. l. vii. cap. 13.

^b Hieronym. in Isaiah v. 8.

^c Buxtorf. ibid. Psal. lxxix. 25.

and lxxix. 6. and Lam. iii. 66.

excellent design of Christianity, and the miracles wrought in confirmation of it, they conceived no small prejudice against it, as a new and strange doctrine, preferring *one Jesus*, that was crucified, to all their gods; and against the publishers of it, as men who *turned the world upside down*. Hence the Christian religion, at its first appearance, was *every where spoken against* by the Gentiles, and accused of atheism and ^dimpiety, as tending to undermine the very being and worship of their gods, and to bring their temples and sacrifices into contempt; which had been for so many ages throughout the world so much revered and esteemed^e. Again, besides the general prejudice the heathens conceived against the Christian religion, as undermining their own, the Roman governors were excited against it, from their jealousy of all innovations in religion, as tending to faction, and *moving of sedition*^f. Now these prejudices of the heathen were manifestly unreasonable: for the Christian religion is the oldest religion in the world; which teaches the worship of the one true God, which the ancient Patriarchs and first planters of the world professed; and is much superior in age to what the most ancient Gentiles could pretend to. And the preachers of this religion were so far from setting up atheism, and contempt of religion, (as they were accused to do, because they preached against the many idols and false gods,) that on the contrary, they pressed the worship of the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and propounded the best rewards for so doing; and also enjoined the most peaceable subjection to government. And yet on this mistaken notion of the atheism of Christians, they were frequently accused by the heathens, as being the occasion of all the

^d Cave's Primitive Christianity, part i. chap. 1. ^e Acts xvii. 6. and xix. 26, 27, 28, 35. ^f Acts xvii. 6. and xxiv. 5.

public calamities that befel the world; as earthquakes, famine, pestilence, &c. The people judging, that the gods took vengeance on the empire, for that neglect of the ancient Pagan worship, which was caused by the doctrines of the Gospel, wherever they took place. This occasioned divers excellent apologies of the most learned among the Christians, in the second and third centuries⁵.

2dly, The doctrine of the *resurrection*, as well as of *Christ crucified*, was a great stumbling-block to many of the Gentiles^h. *Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him: and some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.* Upon which St. Paul sets before them the true God, the Maker and Preserver of the world, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being*ⁱ. And further adds, that it ought not to have seemed so strange to them, that he preached Jesus the Saviour, and also the Judge of all men; seeing God hath *given assurance* thereof, *in that he hath raised him from the dead*^k; and consequently, that by him he both can and will raise others also; especially, since he *hath given such power unto men*, to work so great miracles in confirmation of this doctrine: and why should it be thought so difficult, for the all-seeing and all-powerful God, to gather together and make up the body, out of the same remaining materials, however scattered, altered, or dispersed, (for nothing can be annihilated, or utterly destroyed, but by the same power that created it,) as well as at the first, to form it out of the confused mixture in the dust of the earth!

3dly, The preachers of Christianity taught men to

⁵ As of Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, &c. See Cave, *ibid.* chap. iii. ^h Acts xvii. 18, 32. ⁱ Ver. 24, 28. ^k Ver. 31.

crucify *the lusts of the flesh*, and to abandon their impieties : and no wonder that the vicious heathens (who were *given up to uncleanness*^k) should endeavour to drive such a religion out of the world, which would oblige them to renounce their darling vices. Once more : the dangers and losses, with other tribulations foretold by the preachers of this doctrine, (such as, ^l *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution,*) increased the Gentiles' aversion to it.

The first emperor that raised a general persecution against the Christians was ^m Nero, a prince of the most brutish manners ; who being either offended with the narrowness of the streets of the city of Rome, or ambitious of being the author of more stately buildings, caused it to be burnt, about thirty years after Christ's death, and then laid it on the Christians ; who, though innocent, were yet most barbarously persecuted ; many being clothed in the skins of wild beasts, and as such torn in pieces by dogs ; others crucified, and burnt alive ; and that in a sportful manner, to give light in the night timeⁿ, instead of torches. Under this persecution, St. Peter was crucified, and St. Paul beheaded^o.

Seventh remark. In the history of the first publishing of the Gospel, there is mention made of *prophets*^p : such were Judas and Silas^q, and such a one, probably, was Ananias, who baptized St. Paul^r. These prophets seem to be also such, who are called *'spiritual'*, where the terms are both joined together ; *If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual.* These were ordained for the present occasion, immediately by God himself, they being inspired in

^k Rom. i. 24. ^l 2 Tim. iii. 12. ^m Tacitus, An. l. xv. c. 44. Euseb. Hist. l. ii. c. 25. ⁿ Sulpitius, sub An. 68.

^o Idem ibid. ^p Dodwell de Jure, c. iii. Hammond in Luke i. 11. and in 1 Cor. xii. As also Acts xi. 27. and xiii. 1. ^q Acts xv. 32. ^r Acts ix. ^s Πνευματικοί. Gal. vi. 1. and 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

an extraordinary manner with the spiritual gifts, not only of foretelling things to come, but (which in the New Testament is the proper notion of prophesying) of being *interpreters*; for the interpreting the types and prophecies in the Old Testament that relate to Christ, (as Aaron is said to be a *prophet*, or interpreter to Moses^v), thereby to assist the apostles in making converts to Christianity, and to confirm the disciples in the faith; and, for the present, to perform the duties of public ministry in the church, to *speak unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort*, as St. Paul explains the action of him that *prophesieth*^v, whereby the present government of the church was a sort of theocracy, or under the immediate direction of the divine Spirit; but, as the numbers of Christians increased, the apostles, inspired by the same Spirit, ordained *elders*, or bishops and presbyters, in the cities where they had preached the Gospel^w. Those extraordinary prophets or teachers aforementioned (who were as so many secondary apostles) were most necessary and useful in the beginning of Christianity, before the settlement of particular churches, and the government thereof, by their proper elders and pastors; and this was after the example of the ancient church of the Jews; in which the ordinary ministerial offices, both of sacrificing and instructing, were proper to the tribe of Levi, and the priestly family; the *priest's lips* were to *keep knowledge*, and the people were to *seek the*

^v Bishop Stillingfleet's Sermons, vol. ii. in Matt. vii. 15, 16. who quotes St. Chrysostom in 1 Cor. Hom. 36. that *προφητης* is the same with *ερμηνευτης*; and also other Greek authors, as Themistius, Orat. 1. calls an interpreter of Aristotle, *προφητης Αριστοτελους*. He also observes, that the reason why the name of prophecy came to be restrained to the prediction of things to come was, because future events lying most out of the reach of men's knowledge, the foretelling of those was looked upon as the greatest evidence of divine inspiration.

^w Exod. vii. 1.

^v 1 Cor. xiv. 3.

^w As Acts xiv. 21, 23.

law at his mouth^{*}. But then the prophets had an extraordinary power (of whatever tribe they were) of sacrificing and instructing: thus Samuel offered a burnt-offering[†]. And the business of the latter prophets, as well as of the former, was to warn and teach the people. So that this method was most suitable to the great design of converting the Jews, when the Gospel was at first published, that Christ should give *some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ*[‡].

CHAP. IX.

Contents of the Acts of the Apostles.

HAVING made these necessary remarks, we may now return to the history contained in the Acts of the Apostles.

In the beginning whereof we read the particular circumstances of our Lord's ascension into heaven; after which the apostles and others (in all *about an hundred and twenty*) assembled together, and celebrated the public worship of God, and chose Matthias to be one of the number of the twelve, in the room of the traitor Judas; which they did by prayer and lots, since the Holy Ghost was not as yet given in an extraordinary manner to direct them: and by this means (forasmuch as when *the lot is cast into the lap, the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord*^a) the person chosen into the apostleship did not want the characteristic of an apostle, being chosen by the interposition and designation of Christ himself, to whom they prayed for that purpose^b.

^{*} Mal. ii. 7.[†] 1 Sam. vii. Also Elijah, 1 Kings xviii.[‡] Eph. iv. 11, 12.^a Prov. xvi. 33.^b Acts i.

The death of Judas ^c is thus expressed, that *falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*: in Matt. xxvii. 5, it is, *he departed, and went and hanged himself*; that is, he hanged himself, and (probably by the devil's procurement, who had possessed him) fell headlong from the place where he hung, and thereby burst asunder; his unparalleled sin having met with a suitable unheard-of punishment.

Among those who were assembled together after our Lord's ascension, we find ^d *Mary the mother of Jesus*; which is the last time that she is mentioned in the holy Scriptures. What became of her afterwards is not revealed to us; most likely she continued with St. John to her death, unto whom Christ on the cross had committed the care of her ^e; *Behold thy mother*; that is, take care of her, as if she were such. As for her *assumption* into heaven, (which the Church of Rome commemorates by a solemn festival-day on the 15th of August,) antiquity as well as the scripture is silent; the tracts concerning it are known to be forged in after-ages^f. The first account out of any good author is that of Eusebius, and he only says, "Some have wrote that it was revealed to them^g." After him Epiphanius, who flourished about the year 368, thus expresses himself concerning it; "I define nothing, nor say that she remained immortal, and neither do I affirm that she died^h." So that it is plain, he knew nothing that could be depended on concerning her assumption. Lastly, Baronius himself is so tender as to say, "The church of God is more inclined to believe, that she is now, together with her body, in heavenⁱ."

^c Verse 18.^d Ver. 14.^e John xix. 27.^f Spanhe-

mius Introduct. ad Historiam N. T. Canon i.

^g In Chronico.^h Hæres. 78. Antidicomarianitarum, num. xi.ⁱ Martyrolog.

Roman. August. 15.

We are next informed in the Acts^k, that Christ, who had promised the Holy Spirit, performed that promise on the tenth day after his ascension, it being the day of Pentecost, (a feast of the Jews, fifty days after the Passover,) celebrated in memory of the law delivered on mount Sinai; on the same day the apostles were enabled to publish the new law or gospel, the fulfilling of the old; for when *they were all with one accord in one place*, the Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of cloven fiery tongues upon the apostles and others, that were to be the first publishers of the Gospel. Whereby a company of illiterate persons were on a sudden enabled to speak unknown languages, and to interpret the tongues of others, among a great multitude of persons of different countries and languages; who being some of them Israelites or Jews of the dispersion, and other proselytes^l, were then at Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost: every one of which heard them speak in their own tongues, (whether Hebrew, Chaldee, Persian, Arabic, Greek, Latin, and all the strange and different dialects whatsoever,) which they themselves used *in their own tongue, wherein they were born*; and all this in the name of Christ, and in confirmation of their testimony concerning his *resurrection* and his being *advanced at the right hand of the Father*^m. This was an amazing conviction, and gave a most uncontrollable evidence of a supernatural and divine assistance; this was a full proof that Christ had *all power in heaven and in earth* given unto him; and hereby the apostles and the first preachers of the Gospel were fitly qualified to declare to all that lived in different parts of the world what Christ had done, and to convert mankind to the Christian faithⁿ.

^k Chap. ii. 1, &c. ^l Ver. 10. ^m Ver. 32, &c. ⁿ Compare chap. iv. 31. viii. 17. x. 44, 45, 46. and xi. 15.

The particular effects of this Holy Spirit were, in the first place, an ability of understanding and speaking divers languages, as well to give evidence to a supernatural and divine assistance, (as hath been said,) as to qualify them for preaching to all nations; and also a power of working miracles, by casting out devils, healing diseases, and raising the dead, for the convincing both of Jews and Heathens; that power being a clear evidence that God was with them, and gave testimony to what they preached and wrote, in pursuance of their commission^o. Another gift of the Spirit was, what St. Paul styles the gift of *faith*^p, or the faith of miracles; which consisted in a supernatural confidence or assurance, wrought by the Spirit in the soul of man, by which he was sure he could do such or such miracles, before he attempted to do them: thus^q, *Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains: and*^r, *Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles:* and this gift was necessary, lest they should attempt to do miracles when they could not, and so discredit their own doctrine and authority.

They had also, by this Holy Spirit, their minds enlightened, clearly to understand divine truth; and the gift of prophesying, or of understanding and teaching the hidden sense and mysteries of the Old Testament relating to Christ, and the state of the Gospel^s: also the gift of *discerning of spirits*^t, whereby they could discover the truth or falsehood of men's pretensions^u. And since there were lying wonders, they could discern by what spirit, whether good or evil, any extraordinary operation was performed, to distinguish the works of the devil from those of the Spirit of God. They had also the gift of boldness and courage in their own hearts^x, and the power of

• Heb. ii. 3, 4. ^p 1 Cor. xii. 9. ^q 1 Cor. xiii. 2. ^r Acts vi. 8. ^s Chap. xix. 6. ^t 1 Cor. xii. 10. ^u As Acts viii. 21.
^x Chap. iv. 13.

speaking, so as that their words might sink into the hearts of their hearers⁷. They had moreover, by the same Spirit, a power of inflicting bodily punishment upon great and notorious sinners⁸. Lastly, the apostles had a power to confer those gifts of the Holy Ghost on others, by laying hands on them^a.

These were the extraordinary divine assistances, which encouraged the apostles to undertake, and enabled them to go through with so difficult and hazardous an employment.

Note here, That the power by which these miracles were wrought, and which was afterwards communicated to many of the new converts to the faith, is frequently in this book called *the Holy Ghost*: by which is often meant, not the third person in the Trinity, but the wonderful effusion of those gifts, the dispensation of which is derived from the Holy Spirit, the effects and operations of the Spirit, having often the name of the Spirit, who is the cause of those operations. Thus ^bthe converts at Samaria *received the Holy Ghost*; that is, the gift of tongues, and other miraculous powers of the divine Spirit.

But if the Holy Ghost was now conferred on the apostles, why doth St. John inform us, that Christ, before his ascension, breathed on them, and said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*^c? This symbol or ceremony of breathing on them in St. John, hath been thought to mean a confirming them in their dependence on Christ's sending to them the Holy Ghost, and in some degree a conferring the same upon them, which we read, in the Acts, to be after Christ's ascension more plentifully sent down. But if we consider the whole passage^d, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said*

⁷ Chap. ii. 37. ⁸ As Acts xiii. 11. 1 Cor. v. 5. 2 Cor. xiii. 2.

^a Acts viii. 17.

^b Chap. viii. 15, 16, 17.

^c John xx. 22.

^d John xx. 21, 22, 23.

this, he breatheth on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained: it seems that St. John gives an account of Christ's conferring, or more fully establishing, the apostolical and ministerial authority and commission, of publishing the Gospel of salvation, reconciling sinners to God, and of governing and instructing the church^c; sending them, as his Father had sent him, by *anointing* or consecrating him *with the Holy Ghost*^f. But in the Acts we have an account of the bestowing on them the means to enable them for the performance and executing of that commission: so that ^gChrist gave to the apostles the commission, although they could not fully execute the same, till he should *send the promise of the Father upon them*, and they were *endued with power from on high*^h. To the same purpose, St. John says, *The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not then glorified*ⁱ. Of the conferring of which enabling power, in an open, visible manner, we have here the history in the Acts.

If we consider the sufferings which the apostles underwent, being subject to hunger and cold, want and necessity, stripes and imprisonments, we may conclude that they could not exercise this power of

* This was St. Cyprian's construction, (epist. 69. edit. Oxon.) Quo in loco ostendit, eum solum posse baptizare, et remissionem peccatorum dare, qui habeat Spiritum Sanctum. And St. Austin applies it in the same manner, contra Parmenianum, l. ii. c. 11. So also St. Chrysost. in Joh. xx. 21, &c. In this he is followed by Bishop Taylor, in his Life of Christ, part iii. §. 16. It is true indeed, before this time we find that Christ had *ordained* his apostles *to preach* the Gospel, and had given them *power* to work miracles in confirmation of it, Mark iii. 13, 14. Matt. x. 1. But by this last and more solemn ordination, they were fully established in their office. ^f Luke iii. 22. Acts x. 38. ^g In John xx. ^h Luke xxiv. 49. ⁱ John vii. 39.

doing miracles at all times, or at their own pleasure ; for if they could, most likely they would have cleared the way for their great work of publishing the Gospel, by putting off those sufferings ; nor would St. Paul have left Trophimus at Miletum sick^k, or have suffered that infirmity, whatever it was, *the thorn in the flesh*^l, to have continued on himself. But they could and did work miracles, when God saw it necessary to evidence their commission from him, and to manifest the truth of their doctrine.

The holy apostles thus qualified, set about their great work of publishing the Gospel of salvation, and planting the church.

And first, they preached Christ to the Jews at Jerusalem, of whom above *three thousand* were converted^m. Therefore the church of Jerusalem is the mother church ; the members whereof maintained their Christian society by their unanimity, in adhering stedfastly to the apostles and their doctrine, and by their joint devotion, and mutual love and charity.

The great doctrine which the apostles especially pressed was, that Jesus, whom their rulers had crucified and slain as a malefactorⁿ, was yet alive, being *risen from the dead*, and ascended into heaven : of which that effusion of the Holy Ghost, which Jesus had promised before his death, and the miraculous works wrought by them in his name, or by virtue of his power, in testimony of that doctrine, was the most uncontrollable and convincing proof ; and consequently that the same Jesus was *the Christ*, or true Messiah^o.

Soon after, the apostles came to be the more taken notice of, by healing a poor cripple above forty years old, who had been lame from his birth, and was wont to be laid at the entrance into the temple-

^k 2 Tim. iv. 20.

^l 2 Cor. xii. 7.

^m Chap. ii. 14, &c.

ⁿ Ver. 23.

^o Ver. 32, 33, 36. and v. 30, 31, 32.

court, and so was known to many for some years. The restoring to him the present use of his feet was much taken notice of, and brought together many people: Peter improved this opportunity, assuring them, that the miracle was effected by the power of, and faith in, the same Jesus, whom their rulers had crucified, and who was risen again from the dead, and glorified in heaven; and that he was that prophet, whom Moses had foretold God would *raise up* unto them^p, and whom all the prophets had spoken of, being that seed of Abraham, in whom all nations were to be blessed, that is, the Messiah and Saviour; concluding, that they were the persons to whom in the first place he was sent. This prevailed on many, insomuch that the believers were in number *about five thousand*^q. But the devil, seeing his kingdom decaying, stirred up the rulers to imprison the apostles and first Christians; but God delivered them, and they went on in publishing Christ to be the Messiah and Saviour, in working miracles, and converting many^r.

And whereas some of the believers were poor, divers of the richer sort sold their possessions, and brought the money to the apostles, to be distributed in common, as occasion required. Among the rest, one Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, pretended to do so too; but privately kept back a part of the price, and thereby attempted to deceive the apostles, though immediately guided by the Holy Ghost; as if the divine Spirit could not discern things secret: upon which they were made a severe example of, being stricken dead, for a terror to all others in that infant state of the church, and to establish the authority of the apostles, and the church's discipline: and the effect was accordingly, for *great fear came upon all*

^p Deut. xviii. 15. ^q Chap. iii. 1, &c. and iv. 4, 22. ^r Chap. iv. v.

*the church, and upon as many as heard these things*¹.

And because, on the farther increase of the Christians, there was still a great number of widows and other poor, to be daily relieved out of the charitable contributions of the richer sort, and the common stock of the church, (the Jewish synagogues, to which they belonged, taking no farther care of them, who forsook the Jewish religion, and became Christians;) it so happened, that *there arose a murmuring of the Grecians*, or Hellenists, (that is, as some interpret^t, Jews of the dispersion, who, living among the Greeks, spake the Greek language,) *against the Hebrews*, who used the Hebrew or Syriac tongue: or rather, as others^u, these Grecians or Hellenists were Greeks or Gentiles by descent, but proselytes to the Jewish religion, and afterwards Christian converts, from whom the Jews, who were so by descent from Abraham, are here distinguished by the name of Hebrews. The objection^x, that *the word* was preached to *the Jews only*, and yet ^y some are said to speak unto the *Grecians*, who therefore were Jews, is solved, by observing, that in the original, after the most ancient copies, it is not *Grecians*, but *Gentiles*; and, or but, *some of them spake unto the Gentiles*^z, or Gentile converts at Antioch, who are here taken notice of. And this murmuring was, *because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration* of provisions; possibly because the Jewish Christians were kinder to those of their own nation, than to the Hellenists, or proselytes, who embraced Christianity. Now that the apostles might

¹ Chap. v. 11. ^t Grotius and Hammond in Acts vi. 1. Mede, book i. disc. 20. ^u Dr. Wells's second discourse before the Gospels, and Dr. Cave of St. Stephen, num. 4. ^x From chap. xi. 19. ^y Ver. 20. ^z Not ἁλλήνας, but ἁλλήναι. So the Alexandrian, and accordingly the Vul. Syr. Arab. Æthiop. Dr. Mill in loc.

not be hindered by looking after those poor Christians, they chose seven deacons for that purpose ; of whom St. Stephen was one, who being accused for affirming Jesus to be the Messiah, and the 'abolishment of the law of Moses, was stoned to death^a.

This Stephen was the first martyr in the Christian church. But the malice and rage of the rulers did not end so : the other Christians at Jerusalem were sought after, persecuted, and imprisoned, especially by St. Paul ; who, being zealous, *breathed out threatenings and slaughters* against the Christians : but God turned this to good ; for many being scattered up and down the country of Judea and Samaria, the Christian faith was the more propagated, and many miracles were wrought to confirm it^b.

At this time there was in Samaria a crafty and ambitious person, named Simon, who by sorcery and magic arts had deluded many into the belief that he was *the great power of God* : upon the preaching and miracles of Philip the deacon, he became a convert to the faith : but seeing the apostles, Peter and John, (who came to confirm the church of Samaria,) to confer the power of miracles, and other gifts of the Holy Ghost, by laying on their hands ; his ambition and covetousness prompted him to offer them money, for the power of doing as they did : being rebuked, he pretended repentance^c, possibly fearing to be made an example of dissimulation, as Ananias was. [But he afterwards proceeded in his magic arts, and became the author^d of the first and grossest heresies in the church : at length, pretending to fly into heaven, on the prayer of St. Peter, it is said, he fell down and died.]

Philip having left Samaria, was directed by an

^a Chap. vi. vii.

^b Chap. viii.

^c Chap. viii. 9, &c.

^d Iren. l. i. c. 20. Tertull. de Præscript. Hæretic. §. 46. Dr. Cave, of St. Peter, §. 9.

angel to an *eunuch*, who was chief treasurer to the queen of Ethiopia, (as it was anciently a custom, which still continues in the eastern parts, to employ eunuchs in offices of chief trust and command, especially by empresses or queens, to avoid suspicion^e.) This eunuch, being a proselyte to the Jewish religion, had come to Jerusalem to perform his worship at the temple; and being on his return, was converted and baptized by Philip^f. Some of the Christians were driven as far as Damascus, a city in Syria, one hundred and forty miles from Jerusalem^g.

Paul had received warrants from the high-priest and the council, to secure all he could find there: for it seems the Romans permitted^h the Sanhedrīm, or great council in Jerusalem, to exercise an authority over their countrymen, in matters concerning their own religion, not only in Judea, but in all other

^e Grot. in Acts viii. 27. So 2 Kings viii. 6. The King appointed an *officer*, Heb. an *eunuch*, to restore all that was hers. And Esth. iv. 4. *her chamberlains*, Heb. *eunuchs*. Therefore the Chaldee reads, in Gen. xxxvii. 36. for an eunuch, *Rabba*, a prince or officer. Upon which Bishop Patrick observes, that the Hebrew word *Saris* oftentimes not only signifies an eunuch, by whom the eastern queens were attended; but it likewise signifies all the great courtiers, as the Chaldee here translates it; and that this was the prime signification of the word, till in after-times the depravation of manners, and the jealousy of the eastern kings, made them set none but slaves, who were castrated, to attend their queens: by whom they were preferred to great offices, and so came to enjoy this name. But besides the jealousy of princes, another reason may be given for eunuchs being preferred to offices of state, viz. as having no obligation of wives and children, they may be supposed to be more trusty, and to study more the service of the prince, than their own private advantage, or setting up a family for themselves. See, for the modern custom of employing eunuchs, Thevenot's Trav. part i. b. i. chap. 18. Ray's Collect. of Trav. part iii. chap. ii. p. 269. ^f Chap. viii. 26. ^g As Baudrand. Rauwolf says, six days journey (at three miles to an hour's travelling, and six hours to a day.) Ray's Collect. of Trav. part iii. chap. i. p. 280.

^h Grot. in Acts ix. 2.

places where there were Jewish synagogues; and even the governor of Damascus (with the connivance, no doubt, of Aretas the king) assisted the Jews in their persecution of the Christians¹.

But we have an account, chap. ix. how this Paul, one of the violent persecutors of the church, was in a wonderful manner converted, (by a glory or dazzling light, and a voice from heaven,) and endued with the Holy Ghost. He was also made an apostle, and miraculously instructed *by the revelation of Jesus Christ himself*^k. Accordingly he begins his Epistles with *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ*. He became afterward highly instrumental in settling Christianity in very many places of the world.

There is some variety of expressing the history of St. Paul's conversion. The voice above mentioned, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* St. Paul heard, but *they that were with him heard not the voice of him that spake to him*^l. And yet it is said^m, that they did hear *a voice*, that is, they heard a voice, but they did not understand it distinctly, though they might hear a confused noise like thundering; (so they in Johnⁿ, upon hearing such a kind of *voice from heaven, said it thundered*;) so that although they heard an inarticulate sound, as in chap. ix. yet they did *not*, as St. Paul, *hear the voice of him that spake*, or the distinct words of Christ^o.

What has been hitherto mentioned, is the substance of what was done in the space of about two years after Christ's ascension into heaven: and now it pleased God to order it, that the persecution ceased, and the Christians *were multiplied, walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost*; the sick were healed, and the dead raised to

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 32.

^k Gal. i. 2. 2 Cor. xii.

^l Chap. xxii. 9.

^m Chap. ix. 7.

ⁿ John xii. 28, 29.

^o As chap. xxii.

life, and great multitudes of the Jewish people were converted, to whom the Gospel had been hitherto chiefly published, in Judea, and some other countries where the Jews resided^p.

Next we learn how the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles. To understand this, we are to consider that the Jews looked on themselves to be the peculiar people of God, as being the posterity of Abraham, and that all those of other nations and families, who were not Abraham's posterity, (whom they called Gentiles,) were 'unclean', no better than dogs, and neglected by God; who, they pretended, owned them alone for his children and favourites. Hence our Lord imitated the common phrase of the Jews, when at the first he rejected the petition of a woman of Canaan, (strictly so called,) who was a Greek, that is, a Gentile of Syrophenicia^q; *It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs*^t. So that the Jews imagined the Gentiles had no title to the promises of the Messiah, and did not belong to his church, except they were circumcised, and were made proselytes to them and their religion, and so being admitted into their church, became Jews^u, and were wont to interpret all the ancient prophecies, of God's accepting of the Gentiles, as the members of his church under the Messiah, only as relating to the proselytes^x among the Gentiles, who came over to their religion: upon which account they were wont to upbraid the Christians, as being uncircumcised, and as such having no right to God's covenant^y. But herein they were mistaken; for the Messiah was of old plainly promised to *all the families*

^p Chap. ix. 13. to the end. ^q Lightfoot Hor. in Joh. iii. 17. and 1 Cor. vii. 14. Cave, of St. Peter, §. 8. num. 4. ^r According to the expression, Isa. xxxv. 8. ^s Mark vii. 26. ^t Matt. xv. 26. ^u See 2 Esdras vi. 55, 56, 57. ^x Just. Martyr. Trypho, p. 354. and 361. edit. Jebb. ^y Just. Martyr. ibid. p. 84.

of the earth, the Gentile or Heathen in the most general terms, and such as are not to be restrained to the Jews alone, or proselytes to them, but take in all other nations². Accordingly, when Christ was born, as an angel was sent to publish it to the Jewish shepherds; so the Gentiles, or wise men, from the east were led by a star to Christ. Now the tenth chapter of this book acquaints us, how it was plainly manifested to the apostles, that Christ died for us, who are Gentiles, as well as for the Jews, and that we are of the church of God, and the spiritual children³ of Abraham; namely, by a sheet let down from heaven to Peter in a vision at Joppa, that contained all creatures, as well those the law called unclean, as clean. This taught him to *call no man common or unclean*, ver. 28, but that God owned the Gentiles, signified by the unclean creatures, as well as the Jews, signified by the clean; as he did one Cornelius, who, though a *devout man*, and one who acknowledged and worshipped the true God, yet being only a proselyte of the gate^b, not of the covenant, and so not circumcised, was no Jew, but a Roman, and a Gentile, and as such accounted by the Jews: he with his company were baptized, God ratifying and confirming their title to the Gospel, by sending on them the gifts of *the Holy Ghost*^c.

This was done at Cæsarea, the most frequent residence of the Roman governors of Judea, and therefore inhabited by Jews and Gentiles.

Josephus observes^d, that the inhabitants were for

² Gen. xii. 3. Isa. xlix. 6. Hosea ii. 23. Amos ix. 11, 12.

³ Ἰσραηλιτικόν, ἀληθινόν, πνευματικόν γένος. Just. Martyr, *ibid.* p. 37.

^b See the third general remark on the Gospels, num. 4. That Cornelius was such a proselyte, seems evident; because St. Peter, in his discourse to him, says, that *all the prophets give witness to Christ*, chap. x. 43. which it is not probable the Apostle had done, if Cornelius and his companions had not owned the prophets, as being proselytes of the gate. ^c Chap. x. 44. ^d Wars, book iii. chap. 14.

the most part Greeks, *i. e.* Gentiles. This was the first evident manifestation that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, had a title to Christ. O! let us praise the name of God, who hath called us also to his kingdom and glory^e. We may here also observe, how God rewarded the piety of Cornelius; who, being *a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway*, had the honour to be made the first-fruits of the conversion of the Gentiles; to whom the powers of the Holy Ghost were vouchsafed, as well as to the Jewish converts. [As for the eunuch of Ethiopia, who was before this converted by Phillp, and baptized^f, he was most likely a proselyte of the ^scovenant, and therefore came so long a journey to Jerusalem to pay his attendance on the worship of God in the temple^h, and so was reputed a Jew.]

There are two passages in the holy Gospel, which, if not rightly understood, may seem to contradict what hath been said of this privilege of the Gentiles. The firstⁱ, where Christ charged his disciples, *not to go into the way of the Gentiles, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. This is answered in the 9th and 16th general remarks on the holy Gospels, to which the reader is referred. The second passage is^k where Christ says to a Greek, or Gentile woman^l, *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. Christ was to be in person only among the Jews, to do his miracles, and preach to them, “forasmuch as they were the persons who believed in one God, and who had

^e For this we may read over the whole tenth chapter of the Acts; and then compare with it Rom. xv. 8—14. and Eph. iii. 1—7. and what hath been said, in the first Part, concerning God's covenant with Abraham. ^f Chap. viii. ^g See the third general remark on the Gospels, numb. 4. ^h Ver. 27.

ⁱ Matt. x. 5. ^k Matt. xv. 24. ^l So called, Mark vii. 28.

amongst them the prophecies, and accounts given many ages before of the coming of Christ; and therefore from their corner of the world, he was to be published in all other parts: he being the Sun of righteousness risen in Judea, from whence he should dart his rays into other places and countries^m."

But after his resurrection, he gave commission to his apostlesⁿ, *Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized* (Gentile as well as Jew) *shall be saved*: for then Christ was no more a messenger sent to the Jews, but a king sitting at the right hand of God^o.

Note here, That the Jews, because they were wont to be circumcised, are often called by the name of *the circumcision*, and the Gentiles by *the uncircumcision*: the Gentiles are also called Greeks^p, either because the language of the Greeks was the more general language then in use; or because of all the Gentile world, the Greeks were best known to the Jews, ever since the countries near Judea (such as the Lesser Asia and Egypt) were subject to the Macedonian or Grecian kings.

This doctrine of the Gentiles' interest in the Gospel of salvation was such, as the apostles themselves, for about seven years after Christ's death, and the brethren who were at Jerusalem, were not satisfied in; nor was it as yet revealed unto them by the Holy Ghost: for, although Christ bade them *teach all nations*^q, and told them, that they should be witnesses unto him *unto the uttermost parts of the earth*^r; yet at first they seem to have understood this, of their preaching to the Jews dispersed amongst all nations, and through the earth: and so

^m Orig. contra Celsum, l. 6. fere ad finem. ⁿ Mark xvi. 15.

^o Grot. in Matt. xv. 24.

^p Idem in Acts xxi. 37. and Rom.

i. 16. ^q Matt. xxviii.

^r Acts i. 8.

they who were *scattered abroad*^r, (who were doubtless some of those extraordinary inspired persons, of which an account has been given in the seventh general remark aforegoing on the Acts,) are said to *preach the word to none but unto the Jews only*; but Peter, at his return to Jerusalem, relating the history of Cornelius, *they glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*^s.

This was done about seven years after Christ's ascension into heaven.

Next we have an account of the spreading of Christianity in other parts, besides the country of the Jews; for as it was before observed, that the persecution under which Stephen suffered was turned by God to good, it being the occasion of dispersing the first Christians, and thereby of propagating the faith in several places of the country of the Jews; so also some of those that were scattered up and down went to other parts out of Judea, and came at length to Antioch, a city of Syria, about two hundred and eighty miles from Jerusalem^t, and there the Gospel was planted. The city of Antioch was a place remarkable for a great number of Jews, who inhabited there ever since the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, and enjoyed great privileges and immunities, and the same freedom of the city with the Greeks^u, by the favour of the succeeding kings of Syria; insomuch, that several of the Gentiles became proselytes to them; which might be some reason why those Jews, who were converted Christians, and hunted out of their own country, resorted thither. When the account of

^r Acts xi. 19. ^s Chap. xi. 1—19. ^t Baudrand in Damascus, which, he says, is in the midway between Antioch and Jerusalem, 140 miles from each. ^u Josephus, Wars, book vii. chap. 21. Gr. cap. 3.

the church of Christ being planted at Antioch was brought to the apostles at Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas to establish and confirm them. Those who received the faith of Christ, were before called amongst themselves the *brethren, disciples, believers, and saints*; but by the Jews, *the sect of the Nazarenes*^x, and *Galileans*, from Nazareth in Galilee, where Christ abode; but now at Antioch they first obtained the honourable name of Christians, from Christ their master^y, which, as it should seem, was fixed upon them in an open solemn manner, as the word we render *called* imports in the original^z. This was about ten years after Christ's ascension.

Soon after this there happened a famine, which had been foretold by Agabus, a Christian convert; and the brethren at Antioch shew the fruit of their Christian profession, by sending relief to their fellow-Christians at Jerusalem^a.

About the same time Herod Agrippa, grandson to Herod the Great before mentioned, having obtained of the Romans the government of Judea and Samaria, as well as Galilee, with the title of king, began a persecution of the Christians, especially at Jerusalem, the better to please the Jews; and also out of his own zeal for the Jewish laws and rites, he being a most strict observer of them^b; and having beheaded James the Apostle, (called James the Great, whether because of his age or stature, or some peculiar favour conferred on him, is uncertain,) he apprehended Peter also; but God delivered him, and shortly after Herod died miserably: so the Gospel flourished, and many were converted^c.

In the next place, the xiiith and xivth chapters

^x Acts xxiv. 5. ^y Chap. xi. 19, &c. ^z Χρηματισμα, an Antiochian term for a solemn publication; St. Luke, the writer of this book, being a native of Antioch. Mr. Gregory's Notes, chap. xxxvi. ^a Chap. xi. 27, &c. ^b Joseph. Antiq. book xix. chap. 7. ^c Chap. xii. 1, &c.

acquaint us, how Barnabas and Paul were chosen by the direction of the Holy Spirit at Antioch, and in a solemn manner ordained to preach the Gospel amongst the Gentiles in several countries. They did betake themselves first to the Jews, and, being rejected by them, then to the Gentiles, converting many by their doctrine and miracles; and, at length returned to Antioch, and gave an account of their ministry.

The next thing recorded is the dispute which happened at Antioch, that occasioned some disturbance^d; namely, since many Gentiles, and particularly those of them who had been proselytes of the gate, were converted as well as Jews, whether those Gentile converts were obliged to be *circumcised*, and in other respects to *keep the law of Moses*; which the converted Jews would still suppose necessary; for although they were convinced by the powerful evidence of the Gospel, yet they still retained a very high veneration for the institutions of their great master Moses^e, and their old customs in which they had been brought up; which they would impose on the Gentile converts also. Upon this it was determined, that such a course should be taken, as was, by God's appointment, observed for avoiding schism among the Jews, (and they were the people who made up a great number of those first converts.) They were in such case to repair to the Sanhedrim, or great council, and be determined by the same^f. In like manner, the church at Antioch appointed Barnabas and Paul to repair to those of the apostles and elders, who were then at Jerusalem, (the only Christian Sanhedrim;) for which also some think there was a revelation by the Spirit^g. Here a council is held, and Paul and Barnabas declare what miracles God had wrought by them among the Gentiles for their

^d Chap. xv. 1, &c.
8—14.

^e Acts xxi. 20, 21.

^f Deut. xvii.

^g From Gal. ii. 2.

conversion ; a plain evidence, that they were accepted by God without circumcision, or other Mosaic rites ; especially since, as St. Peter declared, God bestowed on them, as well as the converted Jews, the gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost. At length it was determined, that the Gentile Christians were not bound to the Jewish Mosaical ordinances, as circumcision, and the rest ; only *that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood*. Which injunctions the apostles might lay on the Gentile converts, because they are agreeable to the precepts which the Jews suppose were given to the sons of Noah^b, and which they obliged the proselytes of the gate toⁱ submit to ; which, therefore, it was as necessary for them to do now they were become proselytes to Christianity. And besides this, by observing the apostles' injunctions, they would forbear giving too great offence to the Jewish converts, (which would have been an hindrance to their Christian unity,) by their eating those things which the Jews made conscience to abstain from, as being expressly forbidden in their law, however they might be esteemed indifferent in themselves ; namely, meats which had been offered to idols, that they might not so much as seem to partake in the idolatry^k ; or *blood*, which is called *the life*, as containing the vital spirits, whereby they were cautioned against murder^l ; or *things strangled*, for the avoiding of eating blood^m ; and also that they should abstain from *fornication*, which the Gentiles allowed themselves in beforeⁿ their conversion, and accounted as no crime, especially whilst they accompanied only with those women who prostituted their

^b See general remark iv. on the Pentateuch. ⁱ See remark iii. on the Gospels concerning proselytēs, num. 4. ^k Exod. xxxiv. 15. ^l Levit. xvii. 10. ^m Levit. xvii. 13. ⁿ Grot. in Acts xv. 20.

bodies for gain. This determination Paul and Barnabas returned with, and the disturbance ceased in the church at Antioch, though the dispute was again renewed in divers places, and gave the apostles much trouble, as we shall find in the Epistles.

As to what follows in this book, we have not the particular account of all the apostles' travels, and planting churches; but chiefly of what relates to St. Paul, whose companion the writer was. And, first, we find that Paul and Barnabas agree to visit the several churches they had before planted; but, though good men, there happened a contention about taking one John with them, which occasioned them to part, and go several ways: but the providence of God is to be observed in this, the church being more enlarged afterwards by their separate labours^o.

The xvi, xvii, xviii, xix, and xxth chapters give an account of St. Paul's further preaching the Gospel in several countries and cities, many thousand miles distant; travelling for that purpose by sea and land, from east to west, for about seven years, through many difficulties and hardships, planting the Gospel in many parts of the Lesser Asia; and in Europe, as in divers parts of Greece, chiefly in the cities of Thessalonica and Corinth; the Holy Ghost assisting him, and confirming his words by divers miracles.

Nor did he only travel up and down to preach and establish the Christian doctrine, but also wrote Epistles to several of the churches which himself or others had at first planted; whereby, though absent, he might, as occasion was offered, admonish, comfort, instruct, or confirm them. His great care, and compassionate concern for the Christian churches, may be observed by his farewell speech when he left Asia^p, and in several parts of his Epistles. His zeal also to do and suffer the utmost in the cause of

^o Chap. xv. 36, &c. ^p Chap. xx. 17, &c.

Christ appears, in that it being foretold him by the Spirit, speaking by Agabus a prophet, that he should be bound at Jerusalem, and delivered up to the Gentiles; he was yet ready *not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*¹.

And indeed, as he was designed for extraordinary service to the church, so he was encouraged in an extraordinary manner; for though he was not converted till after Christ's ascension, and so had not the happiness of conversing with our Lord Jesus on earth, as the other apostles; yet in a vision he had a glimpse of the heavenly joys, being *caught up to the third heaven*, where he saw and heard things unutterable'. The prospect of which unspeakable glory, no doubt, made him so earnest in his ministry, and so to neglect the world and this life, that he desired *to be dissolved, and to be with Christ*; and till that blessed time should come, he went on in his office of publishing the Gospel, and, notwithstanding the danger foretold, at length came to Jerusalem².

What became of St. Paul afterwards, we read in chap. xxi. 17. to the end of the Acts, viz. that being come to Jerusalem, he was apprehended and brought before the council, or Sanhedrim, and was in danger of being murdered by the unbelieving Jews; but God encouraged and delivered him. Afterwards, he pleaded for himself, and accounted for his doctrine and life, before the procurators or governors, Felix and Festus, and also before King Agrippa: but after about two years imprisonment at Cæsarea, under the Roman governors, he appealed to the emperor, which occasioned his being sent prisoner to Rome. On the sea, he was miraculously preserved in a shipwreck. Being at length arrived at Rome, he was suffered to

¹ Chap. xxi. 10—14. ² 2 Cor. xii. 1, &c. * Acts xxi. 17.

dwell in a private house. First, he betook himself (as heretofore in other places) to the Jews that were then at Rome, endeavouring to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah and Saviour: some he gained, others rejected his doctrine: then he turned to the Gentiles, and continued there two years. It was about twenty-eight years after Christ's ascension, when St. Paul was brought prisoner first to Rome. Here ends the history of the Acts.

The church writers give us some further account of St. Paul's and other apostles' travels up and down the world, in propagating the Gospel. They converted many countries; the Lord Jesus assisting them from heaven, and the Holy Spirit comforting them in all their troubles, and enabling them with power and efficacy to publish the glad tidings of salvation; so that in less than forty years space, the Gospel was preached throughout all the then known world. At length they sealed their doctrine with their blood, all of them in one place or other suffering death, except St. John, who also was condemned, and cast into a vessel of boiling oil, but miraculously delivered.

The holy Apostles, like their blessed Master, the Lord Jesus, bearing their cross here, and fulfilling their ministry, obtained a crown of eternal life.

Among other countries, our British isles were early enlightened, and blessed with the knowledge of the Gospel of salvation; and that by the preaching of some one of the apostles, as the ancients affirm^a; however, in the apostolical times. O! let us adore and praise God for his infinite goodness towards us, and yield ourselves as that *good ground*, on which the word of life is sown, that we may *bring forth good fruit* unto eternal bliss. *Amen.*

^a Euseb. Demonstr. Evangel. l. iii. c. 7. apud Stillingfleet's Orig. Britan. c. 1. p. 35.

CHAP. X.

Observations on the Acts of the Apostles.

1st, **THAT** the all-wise and powerful God brought to pass his design, in publishing the Gospel, and propagating the Christian religion, notwithstanding all the power and malice, and violence of the unbelieving Jews, or the Gentiles; and that without any human assistance or force of arms, any conquests over foreign countries, or the death of its enemies; but by the sufferings of its blessed Author himself, and most of those who bare witness to it; which is a good evidence, that Christ is that *stone cut out of the mountain without hands*^x, because he it was that set up his spiritual kingdom without any earthly means. Here also we see from what small beginnings the Christian church was at first established in the world, *viz.* from one hundred and twenty assembled in an ^y *upper room*, which so increased, that one of the ancients, in the very next age to the apostles, mentioned ^z the churches of Germany, Gaul, Spain, the East, Egypt, Libya, besides Jerusalem, and the countries near it; and this was according to our Saviour's parable relating hereunto^a, that *the kingdom of heaven*, or the propagating of the Gospel, was *like a grain of small mustard-seed* growing up to a great tree, (as in those countries it did^b.) So that nothing can be more evident, than that this effect of preaching the Gospel was truly miraculous, and the work of God. It is true, when the principles of a religion are suited to the lusts and interests, and wishes of men, as were those of the impostor

^x In Dan. ii. 34, 45.^y Chap. i. 13, 15. See what issaid of the *upper room* on Dan. vi. ^z Irenæus, l. i. c. 6. etnot *ibid.* ^a Matt. xiii. ^b Lightfoot Hor. in Matt. xiii. 33.

Mahomet, it comes so recommended, that it is no wonder it should be greedily received; or when the doctrine is supported by persons in power and authority, and is either forced on men by threats and punishments, or makes its way by rewards and interests, (as the Mahometan religion did,) the cause of its spreading may easily be accounted for; but when, on the contrary, the doctrine appears harsh to men's natures, and they are beforehand forewarned of the danger of entertaining it, with the loss of whatever conduces to the outward comforts of life, or even life itself; and also the promoters of such doctrine appear mean and contemptible, and, instead of obtaining help from, are by all possible methods opposed by, the powers of the world, and those who are eminent either for authority or learning, as was the case of the Gospel; the Divine power and virtue must be supposed to attend its progress.

And further, this suggests to us a plain confirmation of the truth of the miracles being wrought by the apostles, in their first planting of the Gospel of Christ, (and they who are not convinced of the truth of them, must allow it to be the greatest miracle that ever it was planted at all;) for as the very being of the world, when created, is a proof that it was at first miraculously created; so this wonderful spreading of the profession of the Gospel is equally a proof that it was miraculously propagated; otherwise it was not possible it should be so speedily and effectually done, considering the nature of the religion, the weakness of the instruments in themselves, and the opposition made against them.

2dly, That God's best servants may undergo much trouble in this world, witness the labours and afflictions of the apostles.

3dly, We learn here the establishment and practice of the first Christian church, the members whereof were entered into the church by *baptism*; they had

public prayers, and preaching, and praised God; they frequently celebrated the Lord's Supper, or breaking bread; they maintained union, continuing steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship; and were exceeding charitable in relieving the poor^c.

4thly, As there was a distinct order of men under the Mosaic dispensation to execute the office of the priesthood, (Moses, having his immediate commission from God himself, was commanded to consecrate Aaron and his sons for the priest's office^d;) so there was from the beginning a distinct order of persons under the Gospel ministration; for the apostles fixed a settled ministry, *ordaining elders in every church^e*. And as the apostles ordained certain persons to the pastoral office, so they gave them power of ordaining others; whereby due care was taken, from the beginning of Christianity, for a supply of persons in the ministry for the future, by ordination, or laying on of hands, and prayer, as the necessity of the church should require^f. And this solemn ordination was performed, notwithstanding the immediate appointment of the Holy Ghost^g; whereby it appears, *1st*, That an outward visible calling and ordination of ministers is necessary; and, *2dly*, That the bishops and pastors of the church, however restrained or limited in respect of the manner of exercising their ministerial function by human governors, do yet derive their authority, not from the people, or the civil magistrate, but from Christ and his apostles. This will appear more fully, if we further consider the first beginning or incorporating of the Christian church, which was by a divine commission to the apostles, authorizing them to teach

^c See especially chap. ii. 41, to the end, compared with chap. viii. 12. and xx. 7. ^d Exod. xxviii. 1. ^e Acts xiv. 33. Compare Acts xi. 30. and James v. 14. ^f 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5.

^g Acts xiii. 2, 3.

and convince men, and then to admit them into the Christian society or church by baptism, and to settle them as an ecclesiastical body or society^b; which society the apostles call *the body of Christ*, as being united to him the Head, by whose authority it was at first established: so againⁱ, *Ye are God's household, ye are God's building*, &c. incorporated and built up by the apostles, who received their authority and power therein from Christ.

In the next place, as the Christian church first began, so without the continuance of the same divine authority by which it first began, it cannot continue to be a Christian church according to Christ's original institution; nor can the members of it continue to be entitled to those divine privileges, which upon its first incorporation were annexed to it, as to be in covenant with God, and thereby have a title to the graces of the Spirit, and hopes of eternal life; no more than a corporation, at first established by the king's charter, can continue to be the same corporation, and enjoy the same privileges, without the continuance of the same royal authority by which it was incorporated at the first. And therefore the apostles' divine authority in gathering, incorporating, and settling the church, could not expire with their persons, because those divine offices, by which the Christian society or church subsists, cannot be duly and regularly performed, without a divine authority in the ministers officiating therein; as in preaching, and reconciling men to God, admitting them into his church, and making them solemn promises in his name, and sealing to them the new covenant with God, through Christ in the sacraments, &c. Hence they are styled *ambassadors for Christ*^k; *the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God*^l. And Christ gave some pastors and

^b Matt. xxviii. 17, &c.

ⁱ Eph. ii. 20.

^k 2 Cor. v. 20.

^l 1 Cor. iv. 1.

teachers for the work of the ministry^m. So that it cannot be lawful for any to take upon themselves this office, unless they be first lawfully called thereto : for how can any be Christ's ambassadors, and trans-act in his name, unless they receive authority from him, and are sent by him ? Again, since the office of the priesthood is as sacred as ever, no reason can be assigned why a divine commission is not still as necessary as at the beginning ; and therefore for any others who are not sentⁿ, to invade the priesthood, and thrust themselves upon the performance of ministerial divine offices, is as much contrary to the design of the Gospel, as it was for a layman to offer sacrifice under the law. The deacons in the primitive church were indeed to take care of the poor, as hath been said ; but that was not their whole employment ; they did also preach the Gospel, as did Stephen^o, and Philip^p ; for which purpose they were to be persons *full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom*^q, and were ordained to that office, as well as others of the ministerial function^r ; and the distinction of clergy and laity is as old as the first age of Christianity^s.

It hath been objected against one of the offices, *viz. preaching*, that there is no necessity for it now, when all people own the profession of Christianity among us, although it was needful when the Christian doctrine was not well known or understood in the world ; but then it is to be observed, that

^m Eph. iv. 11, 12. ⁿ Rom. x. 15. ^o Chap. vi. 8, &c.
^p Chap. viii. 12. ^q Chap. vi. 3. ^r Ver. 6. ^s Clem.
 Rom. Epist. ad Corinth. c. 40, 41. Ignatius passim. Cypr.
 Epist. 30. Obj. 1 Pet. v. 3. All Christians are called *God's*
heritage, or clergy, τῶν κληρῶν. Ans. This is no more than what
 is said of the people of Israel, Deut. iv. 20. that they were *God's*
inheritance, or peculiar people, that is, in opposition to the
 heathen ; and yet God had his peculiar κληρὸς, his priests
 among his people.

Christ did not only appoint preachers for the conversion of infidels, but also *pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*^t. Therefore, as long as the church is in its imperfect state, as long as it may want unity or knowledge, or improvement, this office of teachers is to continue; which is profitable in its degree, for the same ends for which the holy Scripture is useful, *viz. for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*^u. Some are fallen into errors, others into troubles; some forget God and their souls, and others run on in sin: so that there will always be occasion to instruct and reclaim, to support, awaken, and encourage.

And for the *people*, it appears from what has been said that they had no common right or practice in preaching or administering the sacraments with the ministers in the times of the apostles. Some texts of Scripture have been misapplied in this respect; for instance, St. Paul in those words^v, *not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, &c.* does not suppose the laity as much bound to *exhort*, or speak in the public assemblies, as to assemble; so long as, here we see, there were pastors sent, and commissioned, and appointed to preach and exhort *ministerially*; but the people should exhort and encourage each other by mutual acts of charitable piety, and by way of brotherly communication; and in particular, encouraging each other to persevere in the faith, and in the *assembling themselves together*, not drawing back from Chris-

^t Eph. iv. 11, &c.^u 2 Tim. iii. 16.^v Heb. x. 25.

tianity, and returning to the worship of the synagogue, for fear of persecution from the unbelieving Jews; which was the design of the Apostle in that place. Nor does the Apostle's forbidding the women to teach^w, infer the right of men in common to do so; for the context^x plainly shews the Apostle meant not the ordinary ministerial speaking, but extraordinary, by some impulse of the spirit of prophecy, as was usual in those times, although even in this case he suffered not the women to speak in the congregation. So that this can only infer the right of the men to shew their miraculous gifts in public, but not to exercise any ministerial office, except appointed thereunto.

As for those, who, being *scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word*^y, and those *many of the brethren, who were bold to speak the word without fear*^z; since a settled ministry was peculiarly appointed, it must be either understood of those brethren, whose province it was to preach, or they were extraordinarily inspired, and so had their mission from the Holy Ghost, as prophets or evangelists^a, to proclaim the Gospel among infidels: for the Holy Ghost frequently fell on the first converts. Thus, *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word with boldness. And^c, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.* From hence appears the great mistake of those, who, from extraordinary prophets and teachers^d in the beginning of Christianity, (which long since have ceased,) pretend a pattern for the exercising of the ministerial offices by any of the common people. *Lastly*, What St. Peter says^e concerning the privileges of Christians,

^w 1 Cor. xiv. 34. ^x From ver. 29. ^y Acts viii. 4. and xi. 19. ^z Phil. i. 14. ^a Πνευματικοί. ^b Acts iv. 31.
^c Acts xix. 6. ^d See the seventh general remark foregoing on the Acts. ^e 1 Pet. ii. 9.

to whom belong the glorious titles given formerly to the Jewish nation^f, *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood*, does not infer that all Christians are equally priests and ministers; but notes the spiritual freedom and liberty of Christ's church in a figurative expression, that it is separated from the world, and peculiarly beloved of God; as anciently the people of the Jews were. So^g, *he hath made us kings and priests unto God*; but Christians in general are no more literally priests, than kings. So the same question may still be asked now, with St. Paul^h, *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?*

5thly, As for the primitive government of the Christian church, and the power of *ordination*, or calling and sending ministers; the apostles, whilst they lived, did for the most part manage the episcopacy, or the supreme government of the churches, themselves, presiding over those of their own foundation. Thus St. Paul had *the care of*, and visited the churches of his own plantingⁱ, wrote epistles to them as their spiritual governor, and ordered the discipline^k, and that with *authority which the Lord had given him*. Thus also he exercised episcopal authority over the elders at Ephesus, sent for them to Miletus, and gave them his charge to perform their duties^l; which is a manifestation that they were under his government. But as the apostles withdrew, they committed the care and government of churches to such persons whom they appointed thereto. And this is so evident, that Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, (who was educated under Polycarp, one of St. John's disciples^m), assures us, that "he could reckon up the names of those whom the apostles had appointed

^f Exod. xix. 6. ^g Rev. i. 6. ^h 1 Cor. xii. 29. ⁱ Acts xv. 36. 2 Cor. xi. 28. ^k 1 Cor. v. 1—8. 2 Cor. ii. 6. ^l Acts xx. 17, &c. ^m Cave's Life of Irenæus.

bishops in their several churches ⁿ." This hath been esteemed the true state of the first and apostolical age; of which we have an uncontrollable evidence in Timothy and Titus, and the angels or bishops of the churches in the Revelations^o. Some indeed have observed a community of the names *bishop* and *presbyter* in the New Testament, the same persons being styled *bishops* and *elders*, or *presbyters*^p. But then they were as yet under the care and government of the apostles; for this community of names was proper to the apostolical times, while the apostles themselves kept the greatest part of episcopal authority in their own hands: and even then, supposing bishops or elders and deacons should signify mere presbyters and deacons, there were yet three orders in the church, *apostles*, *presbyters*, and *deacons*; but then, as the apostles were withdrawn, and so the name of an apostle began to be laid aside, [out of reverence to the apostles,] the name of bishops was appropriated to their successors in their supremacy; and things are more ancient than the names they are called by. So that we may allow for the community of names between bishop and presbyter for a while in the church, that is, while the apostles governed the churches themselves (as under the law both the high-priest and the priests of inferior order were called by the common name of priests^q.) but afterwards, that which had been part of the apostolical office, became the episcopal, which hath continued to this time in the Christian church. Insomuch that Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, (who had conversed with the apostles, and was a disciple of St. John^r, and died within ten years after him,) mentions the three dis-

ⁿ Irenæus, l. iii. c. 3. See also l. iv. c. 63. and l. v. c. 20.

* See the first observation on Timothy and Titus, and the second observation on the Revelations. ^p As they conjecture from Phil. i. 1. Titus i. 5, 7. ^q Lev. i. 7, 8. ^r Cave's Life of Ignatius.

inct orders ; “ By Damas your excellent bishop, and Bassus and Apollonius your presbyters, and Socio your deacon*.” To which may be added farther, that however in the New Testament bishops and presbyters might be called by the same name, yet the power and right of ordaining others was in the hands of those who were superior to presbyters†.

6thly, The Jewish circumcision, and other legal institutions, as being types and shadows, were abolished, or rather ceased of themselves, by Christ's coming, who was the substance ; and therefore ought not to have been *imposed as necessary*“. St. Paul indeed circumcised Timothy, that he might accommodate himself to the Jews at that time, the better to prevail upon them, who would not otherwise have conversed with him*; and on other occasions, he complied with them to *gain them* ; but when the Judaising Christians urged the necessity of the Moisaical institutions, in order to salvation under the Gospel, this he could by no means allow ; for that would have supposed that the Messiah (who was the substance of what those ordinances were but as shadows) was not yet come†. The temple worship continued to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the apostles and evangelists complied (as far as they could consistently with preaching up Jesus) with that worship and the law of Moses‡, that thereby they might the more easily convert the Jews, and keep them from relapsing into Judaism again ; for the Jewish Christians were wont to continue *zealous of the law*, even after their conversion“, till by degrees they came more perfectly to understand the

* Epist. ad Magnes. §. 2, 6. and Trall. §. 2. † Bishop Beveridge's Codex Can. Eccles. prim. l. ii. c. 11. and Bishop Potter's Government of the Ancient Church. “ Chap. xv.
 * Chap. xvi. 3. † Compare chap. xxi. 20, &c. and 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22. with Gal. v. 1, &c. and Eph. ii. 15. ‡ Acts ii. 46. and xxi. 23, 24. § Acts xxi. 20, 21.

Gospel ministration. It was also fit that the ceremonial law and worship, which was at first established by God himself, and in its season ordained for the spiritual remedy and salvation of the Jews, should not, like the idolatrous worship of the heathen, be presently condemned as impious and destructive; but go off by degrees, and be the more decently extinguished.

7thly, As it hath been said before^b, that the Jews were wont to receive proselytes, not only by circumcision, but also by baptizing them; so it is farther evident, that their custom was^c, when the parents were made proselytes and baptized, to baptize their children too: and this was so common, that they made a rule, in case a woman with child were made a proselyte, and so baptized, then that child, when born, had no farther need to be baptized afterwards; otherwise it should. Now since we find that the apostles baptized persons who believed in Christ with their families, as *Lydia* and *her household*; and the keeper of the prison, being converted, was baptized, *he and all his*^d; though it be not expressed that infants were in these families, (as most probably they were in some or other of them,) yet since they were wont to be admitted to the seal of the covenant, by being circumcised and baptized among the Jews, when their parents were proselytes; unless it had been expressly explained otherwise in the Scripture, how can we understand, but that the apostles did baptize them with their believing parents? for such infants are within the covenant, and called^e *holy* by St. Paul^f, on the account of their parents *believing*, and being members of the church. The two principal ends of the institution of baptism are answered

^b In the tenth remark on the holy Gospels, §. 4.
 foot Hor. in Matt. iii. 6.

^d Acts xvi. 15, 33.

^c Light-
^e See the

^f 1 Cor. vii. 14.

by the baptism of infants, *viz.* their being visibly admitted members of Christ's church, and a title being conveyed to them in this laver of regeneration, to the sanctifying graces of the Holy Spirit. So that in short, since children are declared by Christ to have a title to *the kingdom of heaven*, and as such were *brought* to him, and *blessed* by him^s; and St. Paul declares those of believing parents to be holy, or within the covenant; since it was the method among the Jews to instruct persons of age, and make them proselytes, and then to admit their children also by baptism; and, lastly, since Christ gave a general commission to *disciple him all nations, baptizing them*, without excepting infants^b, it cannot be understood, but that the apostles did proceed in making proselytes to Christianity, in the same manner as the Jews were wont to do in making their proselytes to Judaism, *viz.* by informing and convincing grown persons, and baptizing them on their faith and repentance; and likewise, baptizing the children also of the faithful, as being within the covenant, and therefore to be received into the Christian church by baptism, as well as infants were wont to be received into the Jewish church by circumcision. As for the primitive church, we are assured it was of general practice from some of the earliest writersⁱ.

8thly, *Set forms* of public prayer and thanksgiving are warranted by the practice of St. Paul, who used to frequent the synagogue of the Jews^k, as it had been the custom of Christ so to do^l. Now the Jews had^m in their synagogues, in those times, stated forms of prayer and thanksgiving, which Christ and

^s Mark x. ^b Matt. xxviii. 19. ⁱ Forbesii Instructiones Historic. Theol. l. x. cap. 5. num. xiv. &c. Mr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism. Mr. Bingham's Orig. Eccles. book xi. §. 5, &c. ^k Acts xiii. 14. and xviii. 4. ^l Matt. iv. 23. Luke iv. 16. and xii. 9. ^m See remark x. on the Gospels, numb. iii.

St. Paul most assuredly joined with them in, when they frequented their synagogues, at the accustomed times of divine service ; and if forms of prayer were either not lawful, or not convenient, especially in the public service, no doubt but that both Christ and his apostles would have cautioned the church against them.

9thly, The gifts of the apostles and evangelists were extraordinary and miraculous, and plainly convincing. They did not barely pretend an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but (as Christ himself had done before) shewed their credentials, and God's seal, by speaking divers languages, and working miracles ; and therefore, those who pretend to the extraordinary gifts of understanding the Scripture, and teaching others, without the ordinary means of study and learning, ought to confirm the truth of such pretensions, by healing diseases, raising the dead, and such like, as the apostles did, or they ought not to be believed ; because, without such demonstration of their extraordinary mission, they presumptuously pretend to a greater character than Christ or his apostles did ; seeing without such signs they would not require men's belief. It is also further to be considered, that, if every one who pretends to inspiration is to be hearkened to, we should be continually exposed to many delusions, since different persons have pleaded inspiration for doctrines contrary to one another ; and therefore great care is to be taken, that the wanderings of men's own fancies be not mistaken for the inspiration of God's Spirit, either by themselves or others. All ought to allow this solid truth, *viz.* whatsoever inward motion is inconsistent with, or contrary to, any doctrine of the holy Scripture, it cannot proceed from the Spirit of God, because the Scripture was at first inspired by the same divine Spirit ; and

he is still the same, and cannot contradict himself, (as we are particularly put in mind^m.) So that all those who teach any doctrine contrary to the doctrine already revealed, and who deny any gospel ordinance, as the orders of ministers, the sacraments, &c. ought to consider what spirit they are of, since it is plain they have not the Spirit of God.

But some have applied to themselves the prophecy of Joelⁿ: *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.* Such would be convinced of their mistake, if they would attend to the explanation St. Peter gives of that very prophecy, viz. that by it were foretold the miraculous gifts of tongues and languages, bestowed on the apostles, and some others of the first Christians, in order to convince the Jews and Gentiles, at the first publishing of the Gospel, and that that prophecy was then fulfilled^o; *This is that* (or the completion of that) *which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God,* (that is, in the times of the Messiah, or Christ,) *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, &c.* upon persons of all nations, ranks, and sexes, as was in that age miraculously effected; and when the pretenders to the Spirit now-a-days can give the same evidence the apostles did of the fulfilling of this prophecy, we may allow them the same credit. In like manner, Christ promised his immediate and extraordinary assistance to his apostles, when they should be at any time delivered up to governors for his sake^p; *It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak,* (of your own ability,) *but the Spirit of your Father that*

^m Mal. iii. 6. Heb. xiii. 8.
16, 17. ^p Matt. x. 19, 20.

ⁿ Chap. ii. 29.

^o Acts ii.

speaketh in you : but those who pretend or expect the like powers, now such extraordinary gifts are ceased, may as well pretend or expect to speak with tongues, cast out devils, and heal diseases, as the apostles did by virtue of the same assistance. *Lastly*, Some ignorant persons lay claim to the prophecy^q, which Christ repeats^r, *They shall be all taught of God* ; which prophecy was by Isaiah applied to the *setting up of Christ's kingdom*, and is particularly explained^s to be meant of being *taught of God, through Christ's revealing to us the will of his Father*, which we are to come unto him for.

Thus also^t, *They shall not teach every man his neighbour* ; *all shall know me from the least to the greatest*, appertains to the new covenant in Christ^u, under which God's laws should be more plainly revealed, as to the spiritual design of them, and that inward purity they should teach, more agreeable to the minds and hearts of men, and as if written therein ; so a clear revelation of God's will is expressed, as being in the hearts of the Israelites^x, or plainly taught by Moses ; but yet the laws of God are more evidently taught by the apostles, as to their spiritual design, than was under the old covenant, which God made with the Israelites when he delivered them *out of the land of Egypt*^y, that is, than by the letter of the law of Moses. This promise, more immediately made to the *house of Israel, and the house of Judah*^z, may possibly be more completely made good at the general conversion of that people.

Lastly, The places of Scripture mentioned by some, for the justifying their pretence of more im-

^q Isa. liv. 13.

^r John vi. 45.

^s John vi. 44, 45, 46.

^t Heb. viii. 11. from the prophet Jer. xxxi. 33, &c.

^u As the

context shews, ver. 8, 9, 10.

^x Deut. xxx, 14.

^y As Heb,

viii. 9.

^z Verse 8.

mediate assistance of the Holy Spirit, in qualifying them for understanding and teaching the will of God, either intend the extraordinary and miraculous spiritual gifts vouchsafed to the apostles, and some others, at the first publishing of the Christian religion, being that *unction from the Holy One, or anointing which they had received*^a; or else, an *enlightening the understanding* by the divine Spirit, the better to apprehend the truths *already revealed by God* in the holy Scriptures; but there is no promise of any different light or inspiration, inconsistent with, much less in opposition to, the same Scriptures.

Thus much for the Acts of the Apostles.

CHAP. XI.

The Epistles.

CONCERNING the Epistles, we may remark, 1st, That there were particular occasions of writing some of them, from the condition and state of the churches, and by reason of some disputes in those times, and of some particular cases in which the Christians desired to be resolved^b. And therefore, the best way to understand any part of these Epistles, is to observe what appears to be the occasion or chief design of them. The want of attending to this rule has caused many and great errors: for to pick out a verse or two, and criticise on a word or expression, and ground a doctrine thereon, without considering the main scope of the Epistle, and the occasion of writing it, is just as if a man should interpret ancient statutes or records by two or three words or expressions in

^a 1 John ii. 20, 27. ^b See 1 Cor. i. 11. vii. 1. and viii. 1.

them, without regard to the true occasion upon which they were made, and without any manner of knowledge and insight into the history of the age in which they were written: it is manifest this would cause great mistakes.

Second remark. Notwithstanding the particular occasion of some of the Epistles, they are all of general use for the whole church in all places, and at all times, by the providential designment of the Holy Ghost; because in them many of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and the mysteries of our holy religion, are enlarged on; such as the resurrection from the dead, the design and use of the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the meaning of many dark prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament, the atonement for our sins by the sacrifice of the blood of the Son of God, &c.

Seeing many of the Christian doctrines are not so fully and particularly explained in the Gospels, it is evident the apostles were instructed by the Holy Ghost to write these Epistles; which, together with the Gospels, were to make up the complete rule of the Christian faith.

Again, in these Epistles many particular Christian duties are more fully treated of; as love and charity, justice, mercifulness and pity, patience, contentedness, temperance, devotion, and the public worship of God, &c. and also a Christian behaviour in several conditions and relations; as of kings and their subjects, fathers and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants: in short, the Epistles more at large shew us the life and spirit of Christianity; viz. that it consists in nicely avoiding all sin and impurity, in living above the world, and exercising the duties of a heavenly conversation, having a stedfast faith in Christ's merits, and being supported under all difficulties and sorrows, with the joyful hope of eternal life. And we cannot but adore the goodness

and providence of God, that such occasions were given for the writing the Epistles, in which the Holy Spirit by the apostles instructed the church, as might be both useful at that time, and also in all ages, to the world's end.

Third remark. The churches were already founded when the Epistles were written; and therefore, we cannot expect in them all the particulars that concern the discipline and government of the church, nor all the circumstances of religious worship: such matters the apostles ordered themselves in person^a. So that we are not to reject the injunctions of the governors of the church in things indifferent, if they tend to promote decency, order, and edification, on pretence we do not find those particular observances to be mentioned in the Epistles. This remark does also instruct us the more to esteem the accounts which the most primitive fathers give concerning the customs of the ancient church, from the beginning of Christianity; which we have reason to apprehend were agreeable to the ordinances which were delivered to the churches by the apostles.

Fourth remark. There were some dangerous opinions spread about, which the Holy Ghost, by the apostles, had often respect to, whether forged by Simon Magus, the sorcerer and magician above mentioned, or others who had very much corrupted the Christian religion, by bringing in the most destructive principles and practices^b; such as the worshipping angels, as being the creators of the world; the eating of things offered to idols as such; and that in a time of persecution it was lawful to avoid danger, though by renouncing the Christian faith, and sacrificing to idols; that good works were a bondage, not agreeing to their Christian liberty and privileges;

^a 1 Cor. xi. 2, 34. Tit. i. 5. ^b Irenæus, l. i. c. 20. et Not. Grab. *ibid.* Confer Cave, St. Paul, §. 9. and Whitby, Col. ii. 18.

and that they might take their liberty of doing what pleased and delighted themselves, though it were sinful.

And as these heretics pleaded for sin and debauchery, so others of them pretended ^c more than ordinary severities and mortifications of the body, and an abstinence from lawful things; as marriage, and eating flesh, &c. according to the discipline of some particular societies of men in those times amongst the Jews and Heathens. Now these heretics contended that Christians should imitate them in this, in order to the perfecting their religion, and rendering themselves the more acceptable to God. The apostles, in many of their discourses, had an eye to these principles and practices. For example ^d, against worshipping angels^e; against idols and their offerings^f; about holding fast the faith, and not drawing back for fear^g; against the debauches and vices of those heretics; and ^h against the pretensions of extraordinary mortifications and abstinence.

Fifth remark. For the more particular understanding St. Paul's discourses, we are to observe, that he lays down this as a foundation of many of them, *viz.* That our ⁱ reconciliation with God proceeds altogether from his free grace and favour, in offering a new covenant unto mankind in Christ Jesus; and this leads him into a dispute against three sorts of persons, (whereof the two first were professed enemies of the Gospel,) *viz.* the Gentiles or Heathens, and the unbelieving Jews; the third, the Judaizing Christians. Against the two former he asserts, that they are not *the works* either of the Gentile or the Jew, whether according to the law of nature, or the law of Moses, which can *justify*, (that

^c Hammond and Dr. Whitby in Coloss. ii. 23. ^d Coloss. ii. 18. ^e 1 Cor. viii. and 2 Cor. vi. 16, &c. ^f Heb. x. 23.

^g Rom. xiii. 12, 13. Phil. iii. 17, &c. Eph. v. 3—6. 2 Pet. ii.

^h Coloss. ii. 20, 21. ⁱ Bishop Bull, Harmonia Apostol.

is, exempt from the punishment for past sins, and make one accepted with God,) and therefore that there is a necessity that all, both Jews and Gentiles, who would be saved, comply with the terms of this covenant, *viz.* in believing Christ to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah, with a due conformity to the will of his heavenly Father, which he hath revealed to us^k.

Sixth remark. A third sort of adversaries to the truth of the Christian religion, against whom St. Paul disputes, were the Judaizing Christians, that is, such as would join the ceremonial ordinances of the law of Moses, together with faith in Christ, as being equally necessary to salvation. For so it was, that most of those who first embraced Christianity were Jews; these had been brought up in an high esteem for the law of Moses, especially the ordinance of circumcision, with the other Mosaical institutions, which they knew to be of God, and the latter traditions of the rabbies; so that however they believed in Christ, yet many of them could not easily be persuaded^l, but that the old legal ordinances were in force still; nay, that the converted Gentiles also (especially those among them who had been proselytes of the gate) were bound to observe them; as hath been before remarked on the Acts. Hence came the dispute, whether only the belief and practice of the Christian religion, as taught by Christ and his apostles, or else, besides that, circumcision and other observances of the law of Moses, were necessary to salvation. Now the setting of this right takes up a great part of St. Paul's Epistles, especially those to the Romans and Galatians; it being the Christian doctrine, that the belief and practice of the Christian religion was perfectly sufficient to salvation, without

^k See, for instance, the first part of the Epistle to the Romans, and Eph. ii. 1—10.

^l See Acts xxi. 20.

circumcision and other observances of the law of Moses. Not but that the apostles sometimes complied with the Jews, as it has been observed before, in the use of some Levitical ceremonies, the better to gain upon them^m. But they could not allow that, after the manifestation of Christ, the ceremonial law, which was the *shadow*, should be imposed as necessary; for that would have imported that the Messiah, who is the *substance*, was not yet come. And besides this argument taken from the law's being a shadow of Christ the substance, the Apostle argues from ⁿ matter of fact^o, in that they had *received the Spirit*, or the miraculous power and gifts of the Spirit, not *by the works of the law*, but *by the hearing of faith*, the hearing and embracing the doctrine of faith in Christ to which the law was to give place. [Note here, those (whether Jews or Gentiles) who, being converted Christians, did yet plead for imposing the observances of the Mosaical law, are termed Judaizers, or Judaizing Christians, by the ^p ancients; and therefore are so called in some of the following papers.]

These two last remarks explain what St. Paul means by saying, that we are *justified by faith, not by works*, or *without the deeds of the law*^q, namely, not that good works are unnecessary for Christians to salvation; for we have seen in Christ's sermon, and other parts of the Gospel, that it is in vain to hope for acceptance, without doing the will of our heavenly Father: but when the Apostle opposes works to faith, by works sometimes he means the

^m Acts xvi. 3. and xx. 20. &c. 1 Cor. ix. 20. ⁿ To the same purpose Just. Martyr argues against the Jews, in that the Spirit did no more visibly operate among them, but in the Christian church. Trypho, p. 248, 264. ^o Gal. iii. 2. ^p Ignat. Epist. ad Magnes. num. 10. *Ἰουδαίζοντες*. Sic Hieronymus in Isa. liv. 1. et alibi, Judaizantes. ^q As Rom. iii. 38. Gal. ii. 16. and often to the same purpose.

merit of obedience, by virtue of any covenant of works, which neither Jew nor Gentile can boast of, being all sinners; and what good is done is through the gift and grace of God. But very often by works, the Apostle intends the ceremonial laws and ordinances set down in Exodus and Leviticus; which the Jews so much depended on, and so highly valued. And therefore it is observable, that the works which St. Paul excludes from justification, are by him styled either simply *works*, or else *works of the law*, but never *good works*: of these last he says on the contrary, *We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*^r. And when the Apostle saith, *faith* justifies, he does not mean a bare believing the truth of Christianity without a holy life; but thus, that we ought not to pretend to justification by virtue of any covenant of works, and the merit of them, nor depend on the law of Moses after the manner of the Jews; but if we believe in Christ, and take him for our Lord, by living according to the Gospel, this will justify us, or make us accepted with God for eternal salvation; or, in the Apostle's words^s, *in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love*.

Again; hence we see how to reconcile St. Paul and St. James, though they seem to differ. For when St. Paul saith, that *we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law*, he is disputing against Heathens, and the unbelieving Jews and Judaizers, and means such a faith as hath been mentioned, that is, believing in Christ, and taking him for our Lord, by living as he hath taught us, without the pretence of the merit of works, and especially the works of the Jewish ceremonial law: and when St. James saith, that *faith without works is dead*^t, he is disputing

^r Eph. ii. 9, 10.^s Gal. v. 6.^t James ii. 14.

against other sort of adversaries than St. Paul did, viz. such heretics of his time, who denied the necessity of good works, as if only their belief in Christ would save them; and therefore he by works means the works enjoined by Christ and his apostles in the Gospel, as the condition on our part; without which our faith is dead, and prevails nothing. So that both the propositions are true, faith without works justifies us, and faith without works will not justify us. But then we must observe, that St. Paul and St. James are disputing about two different things; St. Paul concerning faith, as it is taken for the whole Christian religion, in opposition to any other, especially the Mosaical; affirming, that we are justified by that alone, not by either the natural or judaical; but St. James discourses concerning faith, as it signifies the profession of the Gospel, in opposition to the works required in the Gospel, or the duties of Christian piety; that faith or profession alone, he says, will justify no man before God, without a holy life suitable to that profession, and which proceeds from a true faith. And the term *works* is also used in different senses; faith without works justifies us, says St. Paul; that is, Christianity without pretence of merit, and without circumcision and the other Mosaical ordinances: and faith without works will not justify us, says St. James; that is, not without the works of a holy, religious conversation according to the Gospel; which St. Paul earnestly presses^u. Further, it is to be observed, that even the works under the Gospel^v do not justify us, (by procuring pardon of sins, and making us accepted with God,) as being *meritorious in themselves*; but as being the *terms* of the new covenant in Christ Jesus, and the *condition* upon which we are made partakers of the merits of Christ.

^u Rom. xii. &c.^v Mentioned James ii. 24.

Seventh remark. There was a dispute at the time of writing the Epistles, about the Gentiles having an interest in the Messiah, and being members of the church of God, which hath been spoken of before in the Acts of the Apostles. Now seeing the Jews would not easily own the Gentiles' title, therefore the apostles frequently mention it^w. One particular sign of the acceptance of the Gentile Christians was, that the Holy Spirit, which formerly manifested himself among the Jews, had now deserted them, and was powerful among Christians^x, where the Apostle argues against the Judaizing Christians, that they *received the Spirit by the hearing of faith*, (the doctrine of Christianity,) *not by the works of the law*. To the same purpose the primitive fathers argued, as it hath been observed before. Hence the church of God is compared to an *olive-tree*; the unbelieving Jews were *the branches broken off*, and the believing Gentiles are the *branches grafted* into the old stock: so that properly it is but one church of the Jews and Gentiles, and Abraham is our spiritual father^y.

Eighth remark. As in the Gospels, the expression of *Christ's coming*, &c. signifies his coming to judgment on the Jews^z; so the like phrase in the Epistles is often to be understood to have relation to the destruction of the Jewish nation and people; whereby the first Christians, being generally persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, might be exhorted to meekness and patience for the present; for that in a short time those their persecutors should be disabled from doing them any farther mischief. Thus, *Let your moderation* (yielding^b temper, gentleness, or meekness, and patience) *be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand*, to put

^w Rom. ix. 10, 11. Gal. iii. Eph. iii. 6, 9, 11. ^x Gal. iii. 2.
^y Rom. xi. 17, &c. ^z See the seventeenth Remark on the Gospels. ^a Phil. iv. 5. ^b To *submit*.

an end to the Jewish nation, and the Christians' troubles. So, ^r *Be ye patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* And, ^s *The end of all things is at hand.* ^t *As ye see the day approaching.* And, ^u *He that is coming will come, and will not tarry.* This interpretation of the foregoing passages, and the like, answers the objections of some, who, understanding them to have respect to the last day of judgment, have thought that St. Paul and the other apostles believed that the end of the world was nigh at hand in their times: but the Holy Spirit taught them to affirm the truth; and St. Paul himself intimates^s, that the day of Christ was not nigh *at hand*. Again, they knew that Jerusalem was to be destroyed, and that the Gospel should be planted among the Gentiles, and that the Jews should be converted. And farther, St. Paul speaks of his own death^r, and consequently, they did not believe that the end of the world should be in their times. And as for the passage^s, *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds*; he means those of the faithful, the church being one body, and those who shall be alive at the last day will be fellow members, and of the same body with us.

On the other hand, the phrase, *the day of the Lord*, and *the day of the Lord Jesus Christ*, in the Epistles, generally signifies the last day of judgment. So^a, *That ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*^b.

Ninth remark. In the Epistles, there is often mention made of *prophets*, and *prophesying*; which words are diversely used; (of which before in the

^r James v. 8, 9. ^s 1 Pet. iv. 7. ^t Heb. x. 25. ^u Ver. 37.
^x 2 Thess. ii. 2. ^y Phil. i. 20, 21. and 2 Tim. iv. 6.
^z 1 Thess. iv. 17. ^a 1 Cor. i. 8. ^b So also, 2 Cor. i. 14. Phil. i. 6. 1 Thess. v. 2.

seventh general remark on the Acts.) To prophesy, not only signifies to foretel things to come, but to declare the will of God, and to expound the mysteries of the Scriptures, by the immediate assistance of the Holy Spirit^c, and sometimes to praise God with inspired hymns or psalms^d.

Tenth remark. St. Paul often alludes to some customs that were in his time: so because the Jews (living in a hot country, as did the first Christians) generally plunged the person baptized under water, and then raised him out of it, he says^e, *We are buried with Christ by baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.* And because before baptism their garments were put off, and afterwards put on again, the Apostle alludes to this, when he speaks of the quitting the old habits of sin, and entering into a new course of holiness^f, *That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, and that ye put on the new man.*

Again, Running races was usual in St. Paul's time, especially in the exercises and games celebrated at Corinth^g; therefore he compares our Christian conversation and gaining heaven to the running a race, and winning the prize^h. There are divers such allusions in his Epistles. Furthermore, it was customary with the rabbies or doctors of the Jews to interpretⁱ the holy Scriptures of the Old Testament by a figure, which is called an allegory, when one thing is expressed in words, and another is meant; or whereby something more is understood than is expressed. Thus it was expressed by the Jews, that in the histories of the Old Testament there is, besides the historical sense, another to be understood, which

^c 1 Cor. xiv. 3. ^d Luke i. 67. ^e Coloss. ii. 12. ^f Eph. iv. 22, &c. ^g Called Isthmia, from the Isthmus on which the city of Corinth was situate. See Hammond on 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25, 26, 27. ^h 1 Cor. ix. 24, &c. ⁱ Maimon. Mor. Nev. v. ch. pars iii. c. 43. Grot. in Galat. iv. 24.

is more eminent and spiritual, and which is represented by such a history. Accordingly the Apostle understands by Abraham's two wives, the two covenants; *viz.* by Agar (the bond-woman) and her son, that of the old law; and by Sarah (the free-woman) and her son, that under the Gospel^k.

Eleventh remark. People's saluting each other with a kiss was a common expression of mutual kindness in the first times of the Gospel^l; and therefore, to preserve the sense of mutual kindness and charity in the first Christians, the apostles enjoined the *holy kiss*, or *the kiss of charity*^m, at the end of the public prayers, and before the sacrament, which then was a constant part of the public worship. The clergy saluted their bishop, and the men each other of their sex, and the women of theirsⁿ; whereby the whole assembly testified their good will, and that they were in charity with each other.

Twelfth remark. There were generally in the eastern countries, not as with us, covenanted servants, but slaves, who were bought and sold in the market: thus Joseph's brethren sold him to the merchants^o; to which Christ alludes in the parable of the servant, who had not wherewith to pay his debts, *his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children*^p. To this also the Apostle alludes, *Ye are bought with a price* (of the blood of the Son of God); *therefore glorify God, &c.*

Thirteenth remark. The phrase^r, *in the latter times*, and *in the last days*, in the Epistles, plainly refers to the time of the Gospel, chiefly to Christ's first appearance, or the beginning of Christianity;

^k Gal. iv. 24. See also 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. and x. 1—5. ^l See Luke vii. 45. ^m Rom. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 1 Pet. v. 14. ⁿ Just. Martyr. Apol. i. §. 85. edit. Grabe, compared with Constitutiones Ap. l. viii. c. 11. and Grotius in Rom. xvi. 16. ^o Gen. xxxvii. 28. See Lev. xxv. 39. ^p Matt. xviii. 25. ^q 1 Cor. vi. 20. ^r See the end of the fourth remark on the prophets.

for first, the same phrase in the Old Testament is understood by the ancient Jews^r to import the days of the Messiah, and to be of the same signification with the word *afterward* in Joel^a; *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, &c.* which St. Peter quoting, expresses by *the last days*; ^t *This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, &c.* which both assures us, that *afterward* in Joel, is the same with *the last days* in the Acts, and also infallibly directs us to the time expressed by *the last days*, when this promise was to be fulfilled, *viz.* in the days of the Messiah, the time when Christ's kingdom, or the Christian church, was erected. Accordingly, St. Paul, having mentioned some things which *the Spirit speaketh expressly*, or plainly, were to come to pass *in the latter times*^v, bids Timothy *put the brethren*, then living, *in remembrance* of them^u, which therefore must be at the time when he wrote^w. Here also it may be remarked, that although the expression, *the last days*, imports the time of the Messiah, yet it is not always limited to signify only his first appearance, but, with respect to the dispensation of Moses, it imports all the time from the first appearance of Christ to the day of judgment: in this sense the prophecy may be understood in Hosea^x; *Afterwards the children of Israel shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king*, (that is, say the Jews^y, Messiah the son of David,) *in the latter days*^z: whence, by the way, we may expect, that, howsoever some of the prophecies of that abundance of peace and happiness which is

^r R. D. Kimchi apud Pocock in Mic. ix. 1. and Joel ii. 29.

^a Chap. ii. 28. ^t Acts ii. 16, 17. ^v 1 Tim. iv. 1. ^u Ver. 6.

^w See also Heb. i. 1, 2. James v. 3. ^x Hosea iii. 5. ^y Pocock in loc. ^z See also 2 Pet. iii. 3.

promised under the Messiah, are not as yet accomplished; yet that it is sufficient, if they are made good in any part of the days of the Messiah, though towards the end thereof.

Fourteenth remark. The times of writing the Epistles are somewhat uncertain; most of them are accounted to have been written in about thirteen years space, viz. from the year 52, (that is, nineteen years after our Saviour's ascension,) to the year 65*, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, in the following order: 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Galatians, James, 1 Peter, Philipians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Hebrews, Titus, and 1 Timothy: two of the Epistles, viz. 2 Timothy and 2 Peter, when the time of that destruction was near approaching: the Epistle of Jude, and the three Epistles of St. John, after Jerusalem was destroyed.

Fifteenth remark. The Epistle of St. James, the first and second of St. Peter, the first of St. John, and that of St. Jude, are called *General Epistles*; because not written to any particular church or country where the Christians inhabited, but in general, to those who were *scattered abroad*; several copies thereof being dispersed into different places, and especially amongst the dispersed Jewish converts, being as it were circular Epistles.

Sixteenth remark. St. Paul, in the beginning of divers of his Epistles, writes to the first Christians by the name of *saints*: which term, in many places, does not import that all so called were inwardly sanctified and holy; but is of as large signification as the word *Christians*, in opposition to the unconverted Jews and Heathens, and is the same with St. Peter's expression^c, *those who have obtained like precious*

* Dr. Mill, Prolegom. p. 1, &c.
vii. 10. c 2 Pet. i. 1.

b Lightfoot in 1 Cor.

faith with us, that is, all professed Christians. The term *holy*, or *saints*, in this sense, seems to be borrowed from the Jews, who had been an holy people, separated by God from the rest of the world, and so styled themselves holy or pure, and the Gentiles impure.

Thus much for the general remarks on the Epistles. Next we are to enquire into the design and meaning of each particular Epistle, to the intent that whenever any part or chapter thereof shall be perused, the reader, by first looking over the account herein given of that particular Epistle which he is about to read, and considering the chief scope thereof, may the easier comprehend what is read, and know what use to make of it.

*Design of the Epistle to the Romans, or the
Church of Christ at Rome.*

THIS is placed first, not for that the church of Rome in those days was esteemed the mother church, or the bishop of it the supreme or head over all the Christian church; but because the city of Rome was the chief city where the emperor lived. St. Paul wrote this Epistle when he was at Corinth, a city of Greece; for he commendeth to them Phœbe of Cenchrea, which was a part of Corinth^e: he had not then been at Rome himself^f; but understood that the Gospel was planted there by some others, and that the church there consisted of Jews mixed with some Gentiles^g. How so many Jews came to be at Rome, see before concerning the dispersions, in the fourth general remark on the Acts.

The design of the Epistle appears to be this, *via*.

^e Chap. xvi. 1.

^f Chap. i. 15.

^g Chap. i. 13.

to shew the excellency of the Christian belief, and the necessity all mankind lie under of embracing the Gospel, which is *the power of God to salvation, both to the Jews and Gentiles*. Particularly, in the four first chapters, after a salutation, and some expressions of kindness, it is shewn, first, that the Gentiles were in a lost condition as to themselves; they abused the light of nature, when the very works of God which are seen declare him to be the true God, who is the Maker of all things; yet they were idolatrous, and worshipped and served the *creature more than the Creator*, and gave themselves to all impiety; so they were all under sin, and came *short of the glory of God*. And as for the Jews, they depended on their circumcision, (the seal of God's covenant,) and other observances of the law of Moses; but, first of all, they were breakers and transgressors of that law, and so could not on the account of it be righteous or acceptable with God; but were inexcusable in judging and condemning the Gentiles, for transgressing the law of nature, when themselves were transgressors both against the natural and their own Mosaical law. Secondly, It is not circumcision, or other observances of the law of Moses, nor the merit of any good works whatever, which justifies, (that is, renders a man safe in respect of Divine justice, and makes him accepted with God,) but the free grace and mercy of God in entering into a covenant with us in Christ Jesus: it is true, that the Jews had some advantage, in being *entrusted with the oracles*, or revealed will of God, which the rest of mankind were not; nevertheless, the Gentiles were now capable of justification, as well as the Jews, by faith, or according to the terms of the Gospel. The Apostle instances in Abraham the father of the faithful: now the faithful are justified in that manner as he their spiritual father was; but Abraham

was justified, or received into favour with God, not by virtue of any covenant of works made with him, like those in the time of Moses, or his merit in performing them; but God out of his free grace made Abraham promises of blessings, and that before he was circumcised; he trusting upon those promises was justified or accepted with God: in like manner, we are *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*; God having of his own free goodness offered a new covenant in Christ; and if we embrace the Christian religion, and duly receive the promises and precepts of the Gospel, conforming ourselves thereto, this is faith in Christ, and what will justify us, or make us accepted with God.

Furthermore, the Apostle answers the Jewish objection concerning Abraham's seed after the flesh, and proves that believers in Christ, though they be not natural Jews, are yet by faith the *spiritual children* of Abraham, according to God's eternal purpose, and partakers of the promises. This is the substance of the four first chapters.

Afterwards, the Apostle proceeds, chap. v. to shew the benefit we have, being justified, or received into God's favour by faith in Christ, according to the terms of the Gospel, (of which we have more cause to boast than the Jews can have of their privileges,) *viz.* peace and reconciliation with the Father, a joyful hope of glory, (though at present under tribulation,) and the sweet influence of the Holy Spirit, working a sense of the love of God in our hearts; so that as the first man Adam was the fountain of ^h sin and death, in respect to *all men*;

^h The Apostle says, ver. 19. *Many shall be made righteous*; that is, not actually so, but placed in a state of, or dealt with as righteous, being justified and accepted in Christ; so, *all have sinned*, ver. 12. and *made sinners*, ver. 19. that is, dealt with as sinners, or become mortal.

so the second man Christ is the fountain of pardon and life for all, both Jews and Gentiles: but then, as the Apostle goes onⁱ, since we are all thus accepted, not for works, but through grace and favour, (which is manifested the more by our sins and unworthiness,) it is not to be understood, that, under pretence of giving opportunity for the more favours, we may sin the more; for our very admittance into his grace by baptism supposes a being dead to all habits of sin, as Christ died for sin, and leading a new life of virtue, as Christ rose from the dead.

Then^k, the Apostle pursues the former subject, and shews, that all persons, and particularly the Jews, are now in Christ as free from the law, in the manner it was given by Moses, as much as a wife is freed from subjection to a husband that is dead: forasmuch as the law, *the oldness of the letter*, could not enable to subdue sin, and *bring forth acceptable fruit unto God*, in such manner as when we are guided by *the newness of the Spirit*, the grace and Spirit of Christ under the Gospel: however, the law in itself is not the cause of sin, though it shews what is sin; but a man's own lusts make him desirous of what the law shews to be evil; and so he sees and knows good, and in his mind and judgment desires it; but he is *sold under sin*, becomes a slave to his corruptions. Here the Apostle describes, in his own person, (to take off the harshness and invidiousness of the sentence, and to render it less offensive,) what seems to be meant, not of himself, or any other having grace^l and God's Spirit; but the carnal man, considered in his own natural state, whilst under the law, without the grace of the Holy Spirit under the Gospel^m.

ⁱ Chap. vi.

^k Chap. vii.

^l Grotius and Hammond in

Rom. vii. 7. ^m Such a way of speaking see 1 Cor. vi. 12; 15. and xiii. 2. Eph. ii. 3.

Afterwardsⁿ, the Apostle declares the safety and comfort of those, who, being through faith the members of Christ's church, live according to the Gospel, and subdue their lusts through the Spirit and grace of Christ, and are made *the children of God*, and *heirs* of glory; which the law, as is said before, did not afford sufficient power for. All such Christians ought to be patient under troubles, which shall *work together for their good*, and comfortably hope in God, forasmuch as it is the *purpose* or decree of God to save all those, who, being *called* by the preaching of the Gospel, should embrace it, and live according to it; as the same Apostle in like manner expresses himself, 2 Tim. i. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; and therefore God having foreknown, (or approved of them as such^o,) hath predestinated, or fore-appointed them to be conformed, or made like unto his Son here, in patience and holiness; and hereafter, in bliss and glory; which last nothing shall prevent or separate them from, they being such who truly love God, and express that love by keeping his commandments.*

As for the unbelieving Jews^p, who, after all, expected to be justified by the works of the law, and not through faith in Christ, the Apostle expresses great tenderness for them, as being a Jew himself, and therefore calls them *brethren according to the flesh*, and reckons their privileges^q; yet for their stubbornness he observes, that God had rejected them in a great measure, and owned the Gentiles; who, though not the natural, are yet the spiritual seed of Abraham, and accounted the *children of the promise*, according to his own free grace and mercy: so, though

ⁿ Chap. viii.^o Psal. i. 6.^p Chap. ix.^q Ver. 4, 5.

Ishmael was Abraham's son, and elder than Isaac, yet the promise made to Abraham and his son belonged to Isaac and his posterity. Again, though Esau was Isaac's first-born, yet the seed of Jacob, who was the younger, inherited the promise. In like manner, God doth not bind himself to the Jews only, by reason of their privilege of having Abraham to their father; but may, if he pleases, cast them off for their unbelief and hardness of heart, and receive the Gentiles.

Nor is it strange that God should give up the Jews to the hardness of their hearts: for the Scripture acquaints us^r, that he had dealt so with Pharaoh, who often had hardened his own heart; yet God *raised him up*, that is, to be king of Egypt, or *made him to stand*, prolonged his life, notwithstanding the plague of boils, that at last the power and glory of God might be more eminently shewn in his destruction in the Red sea. So the Jews had often been pardoned, notwithstanding their idolatries; but now since they hardened themselves against Christ the Messiah, God had cast them off, and would shew mercy to the Gentiles, as the prophets Hosea and Isaiah had foretold: for God may dispense his favours as he pleases, like as a potter makes, as he pleases, one part of the clay serve for a vessel of nobler use, and the other for a meaner.

After all, the Apostle declares^t, that the whole body of the Jews were not so cast off, but that he prayed for their conversion; and those who should quit their dependence on the law, and *confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus*, and *believe* in him, might be saved; and there were even then *a remnant* of such, and there would be, in time to come, a

^r Ver. 17, &c. ^s So it is in the original Hebrew of Exod. ix. 16. which the Apostle here quotes. See Hammond in Rom. ix. 17. ^t Chap. x. xi.

greater conversion of them : therefore the Gentiles ought not to insult over the Jews ; but remember that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were the *first fruits* of the *root*, were *holy*, or owned by, and separated to God ; and therefore the whole *lump* or *branches*, the body of the Jews, (their offspring,) may be so too : wherefore the Gentiles should look on the Jews as the *natural branches*, and themselves as *grafted* on their stock. Finally, the Apostle shews, that God is ready to have mercy on all that believe in Christ, *both Jews and Gentiles*.

Thus much seems to be the chief design of this Epistle, from the beginning to the end of the xith chapter. Thence to the end of the Epistle the Apostle instructs them in the duties of a holy life, and earnestly presses the observance of true Christian behaviour ; such as their employing their several gifts and faculties to the good of the whole church ; brotherly love, lowly-mindedness, peace and gentleness even towards enemies ; leaving vengeance to God ; subjection to kings and governors, avoiding impure and debauched practices, and bearing with each other, especially at that time with those converted Jews^u, who were sincere Christians, but yet weak and scrupulous, as to some things enjoined by the law of Moses ; namely, the observation of the Jewish festival days, making distinction between the clean and the unclean meats expressed in Moses's law, which they thought they were still bound to, as also to a conscientious abstaining from meats that had been offered to idols. These persons were not to be despised, but received, and borne with till they were better instructed ; and the confirmed Christians would do best not always to use their liberty, in the utmost extent of it, in things indifferent, (that is, in such matters which the authority of God or man hath neither enjoined, nor condemned,) but to abstain from eating what others

^u Mentioned chap. xiv.

(however weakly and erroneously) reputed unclean, rather than ^a by using their liberty in eating what themselves knew to be harmless^y, to *put a stumbling-block, or an occasion of falling, in their brother's way*, so that, either by compliance or imitation, he sin against his conscience, or fall off from the Christian faith. On the other hand, these weak and scrupulous Christians ought not to judge others that were better satisfied : wherefore he exhorts them ^a to practise forbearance one towards another, after the example of Christ's behaviour ; that all, both Jews and also the Gentiles, may be *filled with all joy and peace in believing on Christ*, who came to save both.

Lastly, Since he was particularly an Apostle of the Gentiles, he expresses the greater desire to see them ; and having sent commendations to several of the church by name, and once again besought them to *mark and avoid* all that should *cause divisions* among them, he concludes.

Observations on this Epistle to the Romans.

1st, **THAT** even by the light of nature we comprehend the truth of the Godhead, and many of his glorious attributes ; *for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead^a*. For instance, the works of the creation prove there is a God : we see many wonderful things in the world, but nothing can make itself ; otherwise it will follow, that the same thing is, and is not, at the same instant ; as being the producer, and so it is ; and the thing to be pro-

^a See on 1 Cor. viii.
^b Chap. i. 20.

^y See on 1 Cor. viii.

^a Chap. xv.

duced, and so as yet it is not. Again; We cannot but observe, as well in the formation of our own bodies, as in that of other creatures, the wonderful effects of wisdom and contrivance of so many parts thereof suited to their proper ends, and the purposes for which they serve. But if they were so brought together by chance, the effect would, against all reason, exceed the power of its cause; and we may as well suppose, that rude heaps of timber, stones, and other materials, should all accidentally meet and raise up themselves into a regular building, as that the world was made by chance or atoms; and therefore there must be a first power, and that is God.

So also we come to know the providence of God, and his government of the world: for he that is the Maker, must be the supreme Lord, and so must have all power to govern and dispose of all things as he pleases. Again; No wise man would build a stately house, but would also take care to keep it in repair; nor would God create a world, in which are so many marks of wisdom, power, and goodness, and then presently neglect and leave it to itself. But in fact we find God doth not so; we see the sun moves on daily and regularly, the earth brings forth according to the seasons, the plants retain their usual taste, smell, colour, and specific virtues; the cattle increase, and bring forth after their kind; and we cannot understand how any of those would be, unless the same Divine power and wisdom which at first created, did also uphold and govern the world. Some have fancied the distraction, which an infinite variety of second causes, and the care of all their concerns would occasion, to be an objection against Providence: but as we find among men, a person of larger capacities and powers can attend to many things without distraction, when those of weaker capacities are wholly taken up with one, or few; so if we conceive the Divine understanding to be as far above ours, as

his power of creating the whole world is above our weak and limited power, we cannot think the government of the world any distraction to him. Lastly, As from the works of creation we comprehend the truth of the Godhead and a Providence; so we also know that God is wise, and powerful, and good, seeing those works manifest such infinite power and wisdom to contrive them, and such infinite goodness, to mankind especially, in making so many creatures for his comfort and refreshment^b.

2dly, That this Apostle had been misunderstood in respect of justifying faith^c without works, to the disparagement of moral virtues, and the duties of Christianity; whereas his great design was to take off the believing Jews from their relying on the merit of any works, especially on circumcision, and the other performances or works enjoined by the law of Moses; but not from discharging of holy duties required in the Gospel^d.

3dly, That this Apostle's sense has not been rightly taken in another point, about the observing or the not observing days^e, whence some are encouraged to slight the holy days anciently observed in the Christian church, and at this day in ours; whereas it is plain, that the Apostle meant only the Jewish feast days, which the weak Christians, newly converted from Judaism, were still inclined to observe. See also the first observation on the Epistle to the Galatians.

4thly, That none ought to encourage themselves, from the latter end of the seventh chapter, in doing ill actions on pretence of *not allowing* them, and because they perceived some struggle in their minds: for there may be indeed a strife between the corrupt

^b Compare Acts xvii. 24—29. ^c See the fifth and sixth general remarks on the Epistles foregoing. ^d Chap. iii. 20, 24, 28, 29, 30. ^e Chap. xiv.

nature and the motions of God's Spirit in a regenerate man; whose actions are, it may be, mixed with some imperfections, and subject to infirmities; but here plainly seems to be described the *carnal* man, considered as under the law, without the grace of the Spirit under the Gospel; who, knowing good; and consenting to its excellency, is yet in danger of being a slave to its sinful appetites.

5thly, That raising sedition and rebellion against kings and governors, and encouraging schisms and divisions in the church, is directly opposite to the Christian religion, since the Apostle so earnestly and frequently urged obedience to governors, and unity in the church; assuring us, that whosoever *resisteth* the supreme *power*, resisteth God himself, and shall *receive damnation*; and that such as *cause divisions, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ*^f.

Design of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

CORINTH was the metropolis or chief city of Achaia, a country in Greece. There St. Paul had planted a Christian church^a, having resided there, and in those parts, eighteen months, supplying his own necessities with working at the trade of tent-making, with one Aquila, a Jewish convert, who was at the same time at Corinth with his wife Priscilla. After St. Paul's departure, the Christians of that church were farther confirmed by one Apollos, a Jewish convert also^b. St. Paul being now at Ephesus^c, understood that the Corinthians (a rich people, and noted^d for pride and haughtiness) were much di-

^f Chap. xiii. 1, &c. and xi. 19. and xvi. 17, 18. ^a Acts xviii.

^b Acts xviii. and Rom. xvi. 3.

^c Chap. xvi. 8, 19.

^d Grot. Præf. ad 1 Cor.

vided into parties and factions by some leading men amongst them, who opposed the Apostle; and that they were puffed up with a conceit of their wisdom, or heathen philosophy^c and eloquence. This gave occasion for what is said in the four first chapters; wherein the Apostle reproves them for their divisions and factious siding with some teachers more than others, and exhorts to unity and peace, and a due subjection to him, as an apostle of Christ; although his preaching had not been with their admired eloquence, and *the wisdom of this world*, but far above it, in *demonstration of the Spirit and of power*, and a discovery of the truest wisdom, viz. that of God, and such as the Spirit of God had revealed, and confirmed by miracles. For his part, he had laid the only sure foundation, that is, faith in Jesus Christ, the true Messiah; and if any man built on that foundation, *gold, silver, precious stones*, chap. iii. viz. sound doctrine, that would abide the trial, as gold and silver abides the fire, he should receive a reward; but whosoever built *wood, hay, or stubble*, those doctrines that would not abide the trial, but proved like wood and stubble, which the fire consumes, viz. such as consisted of curious questions and disputings^f, Judaical observances and traditions^g taught by the Scribes^h, or such like, this labour should be lost, as stubble in the fire; yet such a teacher, if he did it through ignorance of the simplicity of the Gospel, and meant well and sincerely, might be saved, though with difficulty, as a brand plucked out of the fire: for the Apostle assured them, the day would come, (whether that of Christ's coming to take vengeance on the Jews in the destruction of their city, temple, and nation, or the last day of judgment,) when all doctrines and works

^a *Ἦτοι σοφός*, chap. i. 20.
 Hor. in c. iii. 13.

^f Chap. i. 20.

^g Lightfoot

^h Chap. i. 20.

should be tried, as metals or stubble are by the fire : upon which he exhorts them all, both Jews and Greeks, who were called or converted, that they would not set up their own vain philosophy, or *wisdom of this world*, or any legal rites or Jewish traditions, above the plain truths of the Gospel, and that only solid *wisdom of God* preached by him ; which some indeed called *foolishness*, but it should *confound the wise* among them. To this purpose he writes the four first chapters, concluding this part of his discourse with assuring them of his faithfulness in preaching the Gospel unto them, however discouraged by their behaviour ; not without a mixture of threatening, to use the power of discipline Christ had entrusted him with, for the manifesting his own commission, and reforming the pride, and faction, and other irregularities of some among them.

In the next placeⁱ, he writes concerning an incestuous person, whom he subjected to the discipline of the church, commanding him to be *delivered unto Satan*; in order to his repentance ; for by such delivering up, the devil had power to inflict bodily punishment by some disease, &c. on the offender, which the Apostle calls *a rod*^k. He also reproves them for vexatious law-suits, and appealing to heathen tribunals, to the scandal of Christianity, and reflection upon its professors ; telling them, *the saints shall judge the world* and *angels*, therefore small controversies should be left to their decisions among themselves : whether the Apostle meant by the saints judging the world and angels, the establishment of a Christian magistracy, and a power over spirits ; or that they should be assessors with Christ at the day of judgment, is not evident. The Apostle proceeds to caution them, as against other vices, so particularly against fornication, which of all other Gentiles the Corinthians were^l most noted for.

ⁱ Chap. v. vi.^k Chap. iv. 21.^l *Ἦναι Κορινθίαις* Secretari, Grot. Præf. in 1 Cor.

Afterwards¹, the Apostle answers some questions they had proposed to him. 1st, Concerning virginity and marriage: those who, having the gift of continency, abstain from marriage^m, are thereby freed from worldly incumbrances, or live *without carefulness*, and are more at leisure to *care for the things that belong to the Lord*, especially in the *present distress* or straits of the church. However, marriage being appointed a remedy against fornication, those who *cannot contain* should marry; and the husband or wife converted should not forsake either, though unconverted, because the conversion of one of them renders their *children holy*ⁿ, sanctifies their offspring, that is, entitles them to the Gospel covenant; but *if the unbelieving depart, let him depart*; a Christian husband or wife is not under bondage in such case. [But it may be objected, Christ forbids divorce, except in case of fornication^o; it is answered, St. Paul is speaking of a voluntary departing of the unbeliever, and that most likely on the account of the faith, and when it is probable the marriage is dissolved by the adultery of the unbelieving husband or wife.] In the next place, the Apostle declares, that their being *called*, or converted to Christianity, does not make any alteration in men's civil affairs, whether one be a freeman, or a slave, or servant^p.

And as to the case of those of either sex, who, according to the common notions of the Jews and others, esteemed it indecent^q to *pass the flower of their age* unmarried^r; *if need so require*, as that they cannot easily contain, it is best that they marry; otherwise, if one find himself to have a stedfast purpose, and there is no necessity, that is, perceives

¹ Chap. vii. viii. ^m Ver. 1, &c. ⁿ See the twelfth practical observation on this Epistle. ^o Matt. v. 32. ^p Chap. vii. 20, &c. ^q Ecelus. xlii. 9. Grotius, and Dr. Whitby in 1 Cor. vii. 36. ^r Chap. vii. 36.

that he can refrain, he or she may better continue as they are. This seems to be the sense, (not in respect to parents disposing of their daughters,) if by *virgin*^s, we understand a person's own virginity, and translate ver. 38, not *giveth her in marriage*, but *marries*, as may be according to some of the best copies in the Greek^t. And this seems the rather to be the sense, because that this *decreeing*, or resolution, depends upon the *steadfastness* or purpose of one's own *heart*, and *the power* a person *hath over his own will*; which shews it to belong rather to the person who marries than the parent.

After this, the Apostle answers another question^u, concerning the partaking of the feasts in the idol temples, which he would have them abstain from. In the ancient sacrifices, one part was offered on the altar, the other eaten by the offerers: this was esteemed a federal rite^x, or a sign of friendship and communion with that god to whom the sacrifice was offered; so that such a religious feast was a communion or fellowship with the idol, or false god. Sometimes a part of the flesh offered to the idol was afterwards sold in the public market-place: now, as the Apostle argues, the meat is in itself indifferent, an idol being nothing, as for any deity, (only a fiction, no real god,) and so could not pollute the meat. The apostles, indeed, decreed^y, that the Gentile converts should abstain from such meats, especially those who had been proselytes of the gate, possibly by virtue of one of the precepts given to the sons of Noah, (as hath been observed before in the Acts.) Hereby also they would not break the Christian union, by giving offence to the Jewish Christians, who made conscience of eating

^s Ver. 36. ^t Γαμιζων, not νυγαμιζων. Dr. Mill, in loc. ^u Chap. viii. ^x Mede's Christian Sacrifice, book ii. chap. 7. ^y Bishop Potter's Church Government, chap. v. p. 260, &c.

any such ; yet the eating or not eating is not otherwise necessary in itself, or in the sight of God of any moment ; however, since many of the newly converted did think otherwise, *viz.* that eating of such meat was an honour and worship to the idol, a knowing Christian (though he might be satisfied himself the meat was harmless, yet) by going and eating with such became *an offence*, or *stumbling-block*, or an *occasion of falling*, by betraying them into sin, who, (out of an erroneous conscience,) believing such meat to be unclean, were hardened by such an example, in partaking with the sacrifice offered to idols against their consciences ; and therefore a good Christian is to take care how he use his liberty in things indifferent, where there may be danger of being the occasion of sin to another ; as the Apostle himself would rather wholly abstain from such a dish, (as the flesh, or meat, which had been offered to idols,) how indifferent soever it was in itself, than wound the weak conscience of any Christian brother.

Furthermore, as the Apostle exhorted them to a care of using their liberty in things indifferent, so he tells them, how himself was careful in that matter^a ; because, although the Gospel allows of a maintenance for the ministers thereof, (which he fully proves,) yet he himself quitted that privilege whilst he was amongst them, as he did in divers other respects condescend both to the Jews and Gentiles^b, complying with them in order to the promoting the Gospel. Here, upon the occasion of mentioning his own zeal, he stirs them up to imitate him in running the Christian race, taking a comparison from the Isthmian games of running and wrestling, much used at Corinth.

And to make them the more diligent, and that

^a 1 Cor. ix.

^b Ver. 19, &c.

they might not depend too groundlessly on their Christian privileges, but avoid the dangers by which others miscarried, and especially by idolatry, (which they might still be ensnared in, by going to the idol feasts of their Gentile neighbours,) he lays before them^c the case of the Israelites, and shews their privileges and advantages, in being all baptized into the covenant of God, in the cloud, and Red sea, and made partakers of the manna, and waters of the rock, which he calls *spiritual*, because they were types of Christ; and yet many of them, as they themselves might do, miscarried, by reason of divers impieties, which therefore he exhorts them to *flee from*, particularly idolatry, fornication, murmuring, &c. and if they were not wanting to themselves, God would protect them, and not suffer them to be tempted above their ability. Upon this occasion, he instructs them again (as he had done before^d) in their behaviour concerning things offered to idols^e, and shews, that although idol gods were nothing, (as to what the Gentiles believed of them,) yet since, under the names usually given them, as Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury, and such like, the 'Devil deluded mankind, and acted in and by the images^f; therefore, as they who offered the sacrifice did sacrifice to devils, so the going to their idol temples, and knowingly eating of meats offered to idols, as such, was a communion with the Devil, as it were feasting with him upon what had been offered to him, as hath been said, and utterly inconsistent with our communion with Christ in the holy sacrament: and although the meats offered to idols were indifferent in themselves, and therefore lawful when not eaten as such, in honour of and by way of partaking with

^c Chap. x. ^d Chap. viii. ^e Ver. 15, &c. ^f Minutius
Fœlix, edit. Leiden. 1672. p. 247, 248. et not. ibid. et Grot. in
1 Cor. x. 20. ^g Deut. xxxii. 17.

the idol; yet they should be careful to give none offence by eating them, (when they were told, or knew them to be such,) neither to the unbelieving Jews, (who would thence conclude them enemies to the law and prophets, and imagine that Christians were allowed to honour and worship idols,) nor to the idolatrous Gentiles, (who might thence suspect their abhorrence of idols was not real,) nor to the weaker members of the church of Christ, lest they might be tempted by their example to eat those things, which themselves judged unclean, against their consciences: *The earth is the Lord's*, and therefore it both follows, that he can provide sustenance some other way, and also that whatever we eat or drink, or do, it should be all to his glory.

Afterwards^h, the Apostle treats of the decency and order of their public assemblies, that whereas the *man is the head of the woman*, as Christ is of the man, they should not confound the sex; but that the man should be *uncovered*, in token of superiority, and the woman *covered*, or veiled, in token of subjection; which decent behaviour ought to be shewn, *because of the angels*, who are esteemed to be present in the assemblies of the saintsⁱ: and for the same reason of decency, and a preserving of the distinction of sexes according to nature, the man should not wear his hair long, after the manner of women, or which becomes a woman, whose hair growing long, *is given her for a natural veil, or covering*^k.

The Apostle also directs a suitable behaviour in feasts of charity, and *the Lord's Supper*, which they

^h Chap. xi. ⁱ Ham. in loc. ^k Here it is not so much to be enquired, what may be natural or customary in some countries, as for men either to have or wear long hair; but the Apostle's argument seems to be taken from the particular notion of the Corinthians, ver. 14, 15. That for a man to wear his hair long, *it is a shame unto him*; but that for a woman to have long hair, *it is a glory to her*.

celebrated unworthily, by reason of the divisions and factions among them, and the disorders in not staying for one another, and also intemperance, *not discerning the Lord's body*, not distinguishing this supper from other meals, nor behaving themselves suitably to the end of its institution, by a solemn commemoration of Christ's death. This is the substance of what is said to the end of the eleventh chapter.

In the next place¹, the Apostle discourseth concerning *spiritual* persons, and their *spiritual gifts*, such as peculiar wisdom and knowledge in matters of religion; the gifts of healing, and of languages, and prophesying, &c. Of these he declares that every one had his proportion, according to the will of God, and they should not look on each other as single by himself, but one assist the other, and all join for the public good of the church, as *members of the same body*, each supporting and helping another; otherwise, without this unity, and also love and charity, which St. Paul hence takes an occasion to describe^m, the best gifts are not valuable. The Apostle adds a solemn charge against using the gift of tongues without interpretingⁿ, and that *women keep silence in the churches*, so as not to perform any ministerial office in the Christian assemblies, as a sign of their being under obedience or subjection to their husbands^o. Thus much from the beginning of the twelfth to the end of the fourteenth chapter.

And because some among them had learned from their philosophers^p to deny *the resurrection of the dead*^q, therefore the Apostle fully asserts and proves that doctrine^r, shewing, that we shall arise by virtue of Christ's resurrection, which is a pledge of

¹ Chap. xii.

• Ver. 34, &c.

^r Chap. 15.

^m Particularly chap. xiii.

^p Grot. Præf. in 1 Cor.

ⁿ Chap. xiv.

^o Chap. xv. 12.

the general resurrection of all mankind', and whereby Christ having subdued all the enemies of his church, *the last of which is death*, he himself shall *deliver up*, and resign his *kingdom*, or kingly power and office, as Mediator, to the Father; there being then no farther occasion for such a power or office: and then *God* (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) *shall be all in all*, govern all things immediately without a Mediator for the future¹. Farther, if there be no resurrection, *what shall they do who are baptized for the dead*? Of which difficult text there are, among others, the following interpretations; viz. 1st, That to be *baptized for the dead*, signifies to be baptized in the person, or stead, of one that died before he was baptized; (but this being the practice² of some heretics, it is not likely that the Apostle would raise an argument from thence.) Or, 2dly, Upon confessing³ the article of the resurrection of the dead, and consequently in hope of the resurrection: which interpretation seems most probable. And so the question is put, Why have they, in their baptism, made profession of the resurrection from the dead? The Apostle says, indeed, that *flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God*⁴; but that is meant of flesh and blood, as it is now unaltered, and subject to corruption; and therefore he adds in the following words, *neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*: but the gross bodies of the saints shall be altered, as to their quality, at the resurrection, and changed into *spiritual bodies*⁵. Whereby it is understood, that they shall be free from their gross allay, and be refined and made pure and bright like spirits, be *raised in glory*, fitted for the enjoyment of spiritual and heavenly pleasures;

¹ Ver. 13, &c. ² Ver. 24, &c. ³ Ver. 29. ⁴ Chrysost. in loc. ⁵ Chrysost. et Ham. in loc. ⁶ See ver. 14, 17. ⁷ Ver. 50. ⁸ Ver. 44.

and also have no need of sleep or nourishment, like unto a *natural body*, nor be subject any more to sickness, death, or corruption; for *this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality*^b. And as for such who shall be living when the day of judgment comes, or found alive *at the last trump*, they *shall not sleep*, or die, that is, after the usual dissolution of nature^c, *but shall be changed in a moment*, or put into the same state with such who were dead, and are risen again.

Afterwards^d, he puts them in mind of providing beforehand a relief to be sent to their Christian brethren at Jerusalem; and to that purpose, that every one should *lay by him in store*, each Lord's day, in such a measure as God had blessed him the week before.

Lastly, Having exhorted them to stedfastness and Christian love, with submission to their spiritual teachers, as the best way to cure their dissensions and disorders, he concludes.

In ver. 22. of this last chapter, the Apostle pronounces a direful judgment against one who *loves not the Lord Jesus*; *let him be Anathema Maranatha*: the former of these two words signifies *accursed*, or devoted to destruction; the latter, *the Lord cometh*, that is, let him be accursed, the Lord cometh to execute vengeance on him^e.

Observations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

1st, **THAT** the *fire* St. Paul mentions^f cannot be a popish purgatory fire, because it is not proper material fire, but figuratively so called^g, he shall be

^b Ver. 53. ^c Ver. 51. ^d Chap. xvi. ^e Hammond in loc. ^f Chap. iii. ^g As appears from ver. 15.

saved *as* by fire. Again ; this fire was to try not every *man*, but every man's *works*ⁱ, (for which, see what hath been said before on the first part of this Epistle.) Farther, the Scripture intimates no more than two states after this life, in heaven or hell ; and two expectances, of salvation or damnation ; and divides all sorts of people into two ranks, sheep and goats : a third place or mansion is no where to be found in Scripture.

2dly, That it is of much concern, that every member of Christ's church do his duty, in preserving peace and unity amongst Christians, since the Apostle writes thus earnestly to the Corinthians, as well as to the Romans, on this subject^k ; and represents those who cause divisions as mere carnal persons, and their behaviour as contrary to the Christian doctrine, as it would be unnatural to tear off a limb or member from the rest of one and the same body.

3dly, That although the Apostle wrought with his hands at Corinth, yet he declared it to be the *ordinance of the Lord*, that the ministers should be maintained by those to whom they minister spiritual things, (either by public prayer, and praises, preaching, or administering the sacraments^l.) The prophet Micah^m complained, *the priests teach for hire* ; but that was not because they had a maintenance, for God allotted the same, and a very large one too ; for, first, they had the tenth part, which from the beginning God reserved to himselfⁿ, and then settled it on the Levites^o ; then another tithe of the nine parts remaining was to be spent at the tabernacle, of which the Levites had their share^p ; to which, if we add the first-born, with other offerings, the cities

ⁱ Ver. 13. ^k Chap. i. 10, 11, 12, 13. and iii. 3, 4, &c. and xii. 12, 13, 25. ^l Chap. ix. 7—15. See 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.
^m Chap. iii. 11. ⁿ Lev. xxvii. 30. ^o Numb. xviii. 20, 21.
^p Deut. xii. 17, 18.

and suburbs appropriated to the Levites, it hath been computed, that a fifth part of the land belonged to them; and the prophet reprov'd the people for withholding any part of these tithes and offerings, because thereby they robbed not so much man, as God himself^a. But the priests were reprov'd, because for hire they dared to teach, not what God appointed them, but what best pleased the people, and for money soothed them in their sins^f. So the hireling in John^g is not he who receives maintenance or hire, of which Christ says *the labourer is worthy^h*, but he that intrudes, *whose own the sheep are notⁱ*, and designs not their good, *careth not for the sheep*, but in danger fleeth, and leaveth them to themselves^k.

4thly, That the Apostle's declaring against the philosophy, or *wisdom of this world*, and *the excellency of speech*, or eloquence, in the beginning of this Epistle, doth not thereby disparage sound philosophy, human learning and wisdom, or the gift of persuasive speaking, but such vain philosophy, wisdom, and eloquence of the Corinthians, as rendered them proud and conceited, and made them esteem the *preaching of Christ foolishness^j*, and oppose *the wisdom of God*, and the *mysteries of the Gospel*; as if it were beneath their deep knowledge and lofty eloquence to vouchsafe attention to the Apostle, when he preached Christ crucified, *in weakness and fear, and much trembling^z*. But when, on the other hand, human learning, true philosophy and knowledge, and a fluency of speech, are made to be subservient to the glory of God, the Author of every good and perfect gift, and the demonstration of the Gospel, by promoting the great end and design there-

^a Mal. iii. 8.

^f See Mic. ii. 11. and iii. 5.

^g John x. 12.

^h Luke x. 7.

ⁱ Ver. 12.

^j Ver. 13.

^k Chap. i. 18, 24.

^z Chap. ii. 2, 3.

of, to the honour of God, and the good of souls : such wisdom and learning St. Paul is so far from disparaging, that he thanked God^a, that they were *enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge* ; and he himself, as other inspired writers of the Scriptures, very often illustrates divine subjects by the ornaments of eloquence and figures of speech, to make the greater impression on our minds. It is true indeed that we ought to attend more to the truth of them than the ornamental expression ; yet we here learn, that this last is often very useful to make the former the more agreeable and accepted : and farther, as for the study of philosophy, and a skill in nature, it is apt to beget in men the higher veneration for the God of nature. Some indeed, who had but a slight superficial knowledge, and looked only upon second causes, withal having proud minds and vicious inclinations, have become obnoxious to atheistical thoughts ; and have fancied they could give an account of things, without having recourse to a creation or providence : but the more deeply men penetrate into the nature of things, they will be the more apt to acknowledge their own ignorance, and the Divine wisdom, power, and goodness ; and consequently become the more disposed to a regularity in their minds and conversations, and be the more virtuous and religious. The same may be said of the *philosophy and vain deceit* this Apostle cautions the Colossians to beware of^b.

5thly, That the worshipping of images or idols is a very heathenish custom and sin : so the Apostle reminds the Christians at Corinth, that before their conversion they were *carried away to dumb idols*^c. The Papists pretend, that as their images are the images of Christ and some saints, not the idols of

^a Chap. i. 4, 5. ^b Col. ii. 8. See more of this in the third observation on the Colossians. ^c Chap. xii. 2.

the Gentiles ; so in their intentions, the worship which, for instance, is paid to the image of Christ, is referred to Christ himself, whom the image represents : but then, in the first place, whatever worship they give to Christ, they give it first to the image. *2dly*, This was the pretence of the Pagan idolaters, who did not make the image the last object, but fancied that their gods resided in the consecrated images^d. *3dly*, They ought not religiously to worship any image at all ; for God hath made all religious worship peculiar to himself, and therefore he only is the object of religious worship^e ; *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. The representing God by an image, is a debasing him, who is a jealous God, as if he were a corporeal being, or a creature like ourselves. When therefore God hath determined the way of his worship not to be by an image, his law is to be the rule of worship, and not our invention ; especially when the outward act is expressly contrary to his law.

6thly, That it is contrary to the Apostle's direction for the public worship and service to use a language which is not understood by the people, since they cannot say *Amen* to what they do not understand^f. This usage is also contrary to the custom of the ancient Christian churches, who worshipped God in their own^g languages, as appears by the liturgies we have in the languages then generally spoken ; which were Greek in the Eastern churches, and Latin in the Western. Among the rest, they of the church of Rome had their public service in the Latin tongue, because it was then their own language, and well understood by the people : but by the coming of

^d See the third Homily of the Church against the peril of idolatry. ^e Matt. iv. 10. ^f Chap. xiv. 14, 15, 16, 17.

^g See Bishop Jewel's Defence, part. v. chap. iii. divis. 9. and Reply, artic. iii.

barbarous nations among them, they lost their language by degrees, and yet most ridiculously kept up the Scripture and the public service in the Latin tongue, when it was not understood, except by the learned only. Which unreasonable practice is contrary to a decree of one of their popes and council twelve hundred years after Christ^h; and, which is more, to that *edification* which the Holy Ghost enjoinsⁱ; and therefore the Apostle gives this reason against it^k, *the other is not edified*. It is therefore in vain to pretend, as the Papists do, that it is sufficient to be present at the sacrament, or to hear mass, if one knows what is done, and in his heart contemplates the divine mysteries, and thereby raises his affections of love, hope, sorrow for sins, &c. whereby he may be a partaker of the prayers of the priest, and of the sacrifice which he is then offering, although he understand not the words spoken, (as it was among the Jews, while the priest was offering in the temple, *the people were praying without*^l, and could not hear what the priest said :) as if St. Paul's discourse about edification, and the church service in a known tongue, and the constant practice of the primitive church, had signified nothing; and as if it had been no part of the public devotion, to join in the public prayers; or, lastly, that a man may as easily raise his affections by words which he cannot understand, as by those he doth. As for the Jews, what the priest did in the temple at the offering incense, was peculiar to him as a priest, in which the people were not to bear a part with him; and it does not appear that he then used any prayers at all; but there are prayers in the mass which the people are concerned with; and whatever devout thoughts they may have otherwise, they cannot join

^h Concil. Lateran, c. 9. ⁱ Ver. 26. ^k Ver. 17. ^l Luke i. 10.

with the priest in offering up the same petitions to God.

7thly, The Apostle has explained the words of Christ, concerning the bread in the sacrament, *This is my body*; namely, that we are not to understand it, as if the substance of the bread was by *transubstantiation* changed into the real gross substantial body of Christ, as the Papists pretend; for he calls it *bread* after consecration^m; *the bread which we break*; and *we are all partakers of that one bread*: andⁿ, *as often as we eat this bread*, which we cannot do till after consecration: but that such bread, duly blessed, broken, and received, is the *communion* (or communication) *of the body of Christ*^o; a making the faithful joint-partakers of the benefits of Christ's body being crucified on the cross, and his blood shed for our redemption. So that the bread is Christ's body only in a mystical and spiritual sense; that is, the sacrament of his body, as representing his crucified body, and conveying the benefits thereof to our souls. When Christ spake these words to his disciples, *Take, eat, this is my body*, they saw him alive before them, and therefore could not conceive that he meant his natural body to be both whole and living before their eyes, and yet broken and crucified, or given for them at the same time; but they must know it was a sacramental phrase, like that of the passover lamb, which was a type of Christ^p; *Ye shall eat it in haste*; it is (that is, represents) *the Lord's passover*.

8thly, That to worship the Host, or consecrated bread in the sacrament, is to worship a creature, which is to commit idolatry; for although it is by consecration sanctified to a spiritual and more exalted use than it was before, yet the substance of it

^m Chap. x. 16, 17.

ⁿ Chap. xi. 26.

^o Chap. x. 16, 17.

^p Exod. xii. 11.

still remains: accordingly the ancient Christians, as they expressed a great reverence for this sacrament, and apprehended it an unsearchable mystery, and on all occasions endeavoured to inflame their own and their brethren's hearts with the most ardent love of God for it, and the devoutest receiving thereof; and often say, the Eucharist is *the flesh and body of Christ, which suffered for our sins*¹; yet (which is the main point) they plainly distinguish between the *material, bodily, and earthly part* thereof, and the *spiritual, or heavenly part*: the former, say they, we receive with our *mouths*, and that nourishes our *bodies*; the latter we receive by *faith*, and that feeds our *souls*².

9thly, The Apostle absolutely forbids a woman to teach in the congregation, that she may not thereby *usurp authority over the man*; but commands, that the *women keep silence in the churches*; for *it is not permitted for them to speak*; and *if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church*³. What the Apostle says of a woman's *praying or prophesying*⁴, cannot mean the performance of any ministerial office of praying or teaching in the congregation, or during the time of public divine service, for that would contradict what he says in the same Epistle, as above mentioned; but some extraordinary sudden motion or impulse of the Holy Spirit, as was usual in the first times of the Gospel; and even upon that account, they were not permitted to speak *in the churches*, or during the time of public divine service, though at

¹ Ignatii Epist. ad Smyrn. §. 7. ² Forbesii Instruct. Hist. Theolog. l. xi. c. 11, 15, 17. Archbishop Tillotson's Discourse against Transubstantiation. Jewel's Defence of Apol. part ii. c. xii. div. 1. Irenæus, l. iv. c. 34. fere ad finem, et Grab. not. ibid. ³ Chap. xiv. 34, 35. See also 1 Tim. ii. 12. ⁴ Chap. xi. 5.

any other time or place they might, with their head veiled. Whether *prophesying* there signifies to foretel something to come, or to expound Scripture mysteries, or rather to praise God by inspired hymns^u, it is evident those gifts were extraordinary; and the Quakers cannot pretend to either of them, any more than to the primitive miracles of healing the sick, or raising the dead.

10thly, As nothing is to be enjoined or observed in God's worship, but what is in general agreeable to his holy word; so, as to the particular circumstances of public worship, viz. the place, time, method, or manner, &c. these are left to the prudence of the governors of the church, provided all that is ordained of these particulars be agreeable to the general rules of St. Paul here laid down^v; *let all things be done to edifying*; and^w, *let all things be done decently and in order*. Hence it follows, that the mistake of some concerning the ceremonies of the church, arises from their not distinguishing between the substance of worship, and the circumstances thereof; for although nothing can be an article of faith unless God has revealed it, and consequently it is only God who can direct in the substance of religious worship; as adoration, prayer, praise, the sacraments, &c. yet as to the time, manner, order, or method, the garb of him who officiates, and the like, these are only circumstances, indifferent and mutable in themselves, and left to the discretion of the church, according to the aforementioned rule for edification, decency, and order, which St. Paul here appoints; and the enjoining these indifferent things, in compliance with the Apostle's rule, is not *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*, because they are not enjoined as necessary or good in themselves, as the Pharisees

^u Mede, disc. 16.

^v Chap. xiv. 26.

^w Ver. 40.

esteemed their traditions to be ; but only as the Holy Ghost directs, as tending to edifying, decency, and order^x. The Scripture no where says, that nothing is to be used in the worship of God but what is prescribed therein ; and when the substance of Christ's institutions remains entire, the appointing circumstances is not an addition in the Scripture sense, provided those circumstantialia are not disagreeable to the nature of Christ's institutions, and do not render any religious office the less acceptable to God.

11^{thly}, The matter of prayer, and the ability of expressing it, either in known or unknown languages, in the apostles and first Christians, was extraordinary, as the other spiritual gifts of interpreting ancient prophecies, healing diseases, &c. and were afforded for two reasons, viz. to supply the present necessity of the church, and also to be for a sign and confirmation of the Gospel : this is evident from chap. xiv. where we find that some abused their *spiritual gifts* of tongues, by their prayers and hymns in the public assemblies, when none or few were present who understood them ; this being so contrary to that decency, order, and edification, which the Apostle directs them 'in, as a rule for the regulating of their behaviour, and the exercise of their gifts in public', he forbids any one's praying or singing in an unknown tongue, unless the *meaning* were known to the rest, or himself or any one present *interpret* the meaning^z ; and then adds, ^a *What is it then ? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also ; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also*, that is, so as to be understood, or to *teach others*^b. So that no one ought any more to pretend to the gift

^x See the third remark on the Gospels.

^y Ver. 26, 40.

^a Ver. 8—15.

^a Ver. 15.

^b Ver. 19.

of praying with or by the Spirit, in the sense the Apostle here speaks, than of tongues, or languages, which he never learnt. The like seems to be the true sense of these words^d: *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*: in which place, the Apostle is speaking of those who had *the first-fruits of the Spirit*^e, that is, were endowed with the extraordinary gifts^f thereof. So that, as far as we can know, since miracles are ceased, the gift of prayer, which we can expect now, is properly that *compunction of the heart* in praying, whereby we may perform the duty rightly, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit; and therefore, when we perceive our minds to be possessed with deep impressions of the glorious majesty of God, his holiness and purity, infinite power, justice, love, and goodness to all his creatures, especially to mankind; together with an humble sense of our own vileness and pollutions, and of our necessities, and absolute dependence upon him; if from hence our affections are excited, and our hearts lifted up to God, through faith in Christ, with fervour, and affectionate reliance on his goodness, and entire resignation to his will, this is *spiritual praying*, whether we have gotten some form of a prayer by heart, or read the same in a book, or hear it read by others.

12thly, The Apostle affords an evident argument for infant baptism^h: *the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy*; that is, having by birth a title or claim to be admitted into the Chris-

^d Rom. viii. 26.

^e Ver. 23.

^f See Chrysost. in loc.

and Hammond in Jude, verse 20.

^g Compare Eph. vi. 18.

and Jude, verse 20.

^h Chap. vii. 14.

tian covenant^a, which the children of unbelievers have not; as appears, because the Scriptures often understand by the *unclean*, the Heathens, in opposition to the Jews, who were the clean or *holy* people, that is, in covenant with God. So, *"An highway shall be there, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but the redeemed shall walk there"*^b. Hence the Jews are styled *an holy seed*^c. In the same sense the Jews, in the times of the New Testament, were wont to understand^d the term *holy*; for when a man and his wife, who had been Heathens, were made proselytes to Judaism, they were to be separated ninety days, that it might be known whether their children were begotten *without holiness*, as they expressed it, or *within*; that is, whilst the parents were Gentiles or Jewish proselytes, and so within the covenant; to which known and common sense of the word *holy* the Apostle here alludes. And thus St. Peter^e, where he observes, that the holy people, who had been in covenant with God, namely, the Jews, being cast off, the professors of Christianity were separated to be the people of God, and so became holy; *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God*. And in this sense St. Paul shews in the forecited passage^f, that the children of either Christian parent are holy, or have a title to be admitted to the covenant of grace; and then they are as capable of being so admitted, and of receiving the sign thereof, *viz.* baptism, as the holy seed of the Jews were of circumcision.

^a Which St. Jerom expresses by *candidati fidei*; apud Grot. in loc. ^b Isa. xxxv. 8, 9. ^c See also Isaiah lii. 1. Acts x. 28.

^d Ezra ix. 2. ^e Isaiah vi. 13. ^f Lightfoot Hor. in 1 Cor. vii. 14. ^g 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. ^h 1 Cor. vii. 14.

It is objected; that by *unclean* is meant *bastards*, and being *holy* signifies *legitimate*: but that cannot be; 1st, Because if both parents were Heathens, the children would not be therefore bastards. And, 2^{dly}, The Apostle is not there speaking of any political affair, as of bastardy or legitimacy, but for the satisfaction of the conscience of such a Christian man or woman, whose wife or husband was a Gentile or unbeliever; that the Christian in such case should not dissolve the marriage, because it was so far sanctified by one of them being a Christian, that their children were as holy, having as much a title to the covenant of grace, as if both parents had been Christians^e.

13^{thly}, Though St. Paul commends the Corinthians for keeping the ordinances, or traditions, which he delivered them^h, yet this can be no plea for the superstitious traditions of the Papists, till they can prove them to have been delivered by the mouth of an Apostle, and received as such by the primitive church, as were the ordinances and traditions which St. Paul mentions.

14^{thly}, From the directionⁱ, *Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him*; many pious Christians, both in the ancient church, and of latter years, have kept a stock in a box or purse^k for the poor, that might be ready as opportunity should be offered to distribute it; and have experienced a great convenience in this method of charity, in being so far from grudging when a due occasion has been offered, that they have been rather pleased with an opportunity of disposing well what they have laid up for that purpose. And farther, hence we learn, that not only the richer sort are concerned in the duty of charity, but all Christians in one degree or other, (though

^e See farther the seventh observation on the Acts. ^h Chap. xi. 2.

ⁱ Chap. xvi. 2.

^k Κεκολλητο ποταμιον. Chrysost. in loc.

the greater the ability is, the greater is the obligation to the duty, and the more are the opportunities of performing it.) St. Paul here appoints that every one lay by in store, *as God hath prospered him*; and the measure of charity is proportioned *according to that a man hath*¹, and *the ability which God giveth*^m: so that when a poor man sees another to be in more want than himself is at such a time, either in respect to sufferings in body or goods, in such case Christian compassion, and the giving assistance, is the poor man's duty, and will procure his reward.



Design of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

ST. PAUL having understood by Titus (whom he met at Macedoniaⁿ) the good effects of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, in their sorrow, submission, and good disposition towards him; in this Second he treats them accordingly, although there were still some remaining that opposed him, whom he frequently takes occasion sharply to reprove, but at the same time so as not to discourage the rest. In this Epistle it hath been observed, and will soon appear to any one who reads and considers it with attention, that the Apostle, through his affection and concern, applies to them with great art and insinuation; by turns commending and threatening, frowning and smiling on them. And first of all, he encourages them in trouble, from the consideration of his own deliverance, and gives them an account of his delay in coming to them, that it was not out of inconstancy, but chiefly *to spare them*^o; for that

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 12.

^m 1 Pet. iv. 11.

ⁿ Chap. vii. 5, 6.

^o Chap. i. 23.

having not heard of their reformation before Titus's return, he was loth to come to correct them, according to the power given him by the Holy Ghost, which would have occasioned an *heaviness*^o. He also gives order about the incestuous person mentioned in the former Epistle, who had been excommunicated, and delivered over unto Satan; that the censure and punishment should be taken off.

After this^p, whereas one principal cause of the faction and disorder among them, complained of in the former Epistle, proceeded from some false teachers having corrupted the Christian doctrine, and disgraced the Apostle, he vindicates the Gospel ministry in general, as being far above that under the law of Moses; and assures them in particular of his own sincerity and faithfulness, and the joy he conceived in their spiritual good, and their godly sorrow and reformation.

^q He exhorts them to hasten their contribution for the relief of their poor brethren the Christians at Jerusalem, after the example of the church in Macedonia. On this occasion are mentioned many excellent motives and encouragements to the duty of liberal alms-giving, worthy to be often and seriously read by all Christians.

Then ^r he returns again to exhort them not to hearken to his opposers, those false apostles, who, by debasing his person and authority amongst them, were an hindrance to their edification. These slanderers oblige him to give some account of his own zeal in promoting the Gospel, and of his labours and sufferings for it, and of the favours he had of being wrapped up into the third heaven, where he had a glimpse of the joys above; nevertheless, he gloried

^o Chap. ii. 1. ^p Chap. iii. &c. to the end of the viiith.

^q In chapters viii. and ix: ^r Chap. x. &c. to verse 14, of the xiiith chapter.

most in the cross of Christ, and acknowledged his infirmities and afflictions, the *thorn in the flesh*, to be permitted, lest he should be exalted above measure. What was the particular infirmity or affliction here spoken of is not mentioned: it could not be the motions to lust, because he had in a singular manner the *gift of continence*^{*}; nor would he have *gloried* therein, as he did[†]; it was most probably some extraordinary bodily pain or distemper, which was visible and known[‡], in which manner God sometimes exercises his best servants.

Lastly^{*}, he signifies his readiness to see them again; in the mean time, he exhorts them to lay aside their disorders and factions, attended with debates and strifes, backbitings and tumults; and also hopes he may not find any but what do sufficiently repent of their fornications, uncleanness, and all other vices; lest when he came he should *not spare*. And as for a *proof* of his apostleship, which the false teachers demanded, that appeared even by themselves; and the effect which the Gospel had, since Christ was mighty in them, by his grace and the gifts of the Spirit so manifest among them. He exhorts them therefore to examine themselves, whether they were *in the truth* or no; and to lay aside all their prejudices against him, that they might be still *approved* of God; that so he might not be forced to exercise the apostolical authority, and inflict the censure of the church, or *use sharpness*; but if it should so happen, the main design would be not their destruction, but edification; concluding with a solemn charge, that they check all their old divisions, and preserve unity and peace among themselves, and then *the God of love and peace* would be with them. For all which purposes, he gives them that solemn

* 1 Cor. vii. 7. † Chap. xii. 9. ‡ Gal. iv. 13, 14. * Chap. xii. 14, &c. to the end of the Epistle.

benediction, *The grace, or favour, of our Lord Jesus Christ; the meritorious cause of our redemption, and the love of God the Father, and the communion, fellowship, or a partaking of the gifts and sanctification of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.*

Observations on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

1st, **THAT** liberal alms-giving is a proper Christian duty, which will be accepted and rewarded^a.

2dly, That if a man designs and purposes God's glory, and the discharge of his duty, he needs not be much disturbed at the disgraceful reproaches of ill-natured persons; since St. Paul, so holy and zealous for the general good of the church, yet could not escape backbiting and slanderous tongues^b.

3dly, That the Quakers' pretence of Christ, or *the Spirit within them*, in some extraordinary manner to enlighten and guide them by immediate revelation above all others, is by a mistake grounded on the words^c, *Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you?* For the Apostle does not speak this to any single person, but to the church of Corinth in general; and the words signify *in* or *among you*; as when we say such a one is *in* our company, we mean that he is amongst us. So, whereas the Corinthians wanted a *proof of Christ's speaking* in or by St. Paul^d, he asks them, *Know ye not yourselves*, that is, by the miracles done among you, and various gifts of the Spirit conferred on, and also a spiritual life and conversation wrought in, divers of you, that through my preaching Jesus Christ is manifested among you, and may indeed be said to abide in many of you, by his grace and gifts of his Holy

^a Chap. viii. ix.

^b Chap. x. 10.

^c 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

^d Verse 3.

Spirit, *except ye be reprobates*, disapproved of God, and so have provoked him, either not to grant, or to withdraw these gifts from you. But then the gross mistake of those people is twofold; first, that they confound the two sorts of spiritual gifts, the extraordinary ones vouchsafed to the Apostles, and some first Christians, of working miracles, with those which are to continue in the church; and vainly support their pretences to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, by promises peculiar to the Apostles and first Christians. And further, they make the Spirit to contradict himself, in particular by denying the two sacraments of Christ's institution, as it is revealed to us by the same Spirit in the holy Scriptures^c,



Design of the Epistle to the Galatians, or the Christians at Galatia.

GALATIA was not a particular city, but a country or province of the Lesser Asia, where St. Paul had preached the Gospel^a. He had, it seems, heard, that since his departure several *false brethren*, or Judaizers, had crept in amongst them, and, as in other places, had taught the necessity of observing circumcision, and the other ordinances of the law of Moses: to which purpose they vilified the person of St. Paul, as if he (who was the great stickler against the legal ordinances) had only received his doctrine from others, and therefore was not so much to be hearkened to as the other Apostles, who had been conversant with Christ upon earth, particularly Peter, James, and John (who preaching chiefly to the Jews,

^c See the twelfth practical observation on the Gospels,
^a Acts xviii. 23.

might not be so earnest at first against circumcision, and the other rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, the better to gain upon that people.) St. Paul declares^b, that although he was not converted till after Christ's ascension, yet he learned not his doctrine from any of the Apostles, but by immediate revelation from heaven^c: and that he was an Apostle of Christ, having received a particular commission from the Lord Jesus for the conversion of the Gentiles; whose conversation Peter withdrawing from at Antioch, upon the coming of some Jewish converts thither, was *to be blamed*; in that he discouraged the Gentile converts, and too much complied with the Judaizing Christians.

And because the false teachers would persuade the Galatians, that circumcision and the other Mosaic rites were necessary, and which they were to be justified by; this the Apostle largely refutes^d. And first of all demands, whether they had not received the miraculous gifts of the Spirit when believing in Christ, and not whilst under the law? And afterwards shews, that Abraham was justified by faith, and that believers in Christ are the spiritual *children of Abraham*, in whom *all nations* were to be *blessed*, Christ the Messiah being descended from him. Now the covenant was made with Abraham long before the law was given; so that there is now no distinction between Jew and Gentile, but they are equally *heirs of God through Christ*: and there is no occasion for the converted Gentiles, who are freed from the heathen rites, to turn again to the like *beggarly elements*, or rites of the law, as to observe the Jewish sabbath days, and new moons, and yearly feasts.

This he illustrates^e by Abraham's two sons; *viz.*

^b Chap. i. to the 16th verse of chap. ii. ^c See Acts xxvi. 15, 16. ^d Chap. ii. 16, &c. and chap. iii. iv. ^e Chap. iv. 21, &c.

Ishmael, by Hagar a bondmaid^f, and Isaac, by Sarah a freewoman^g.

Ishmael was *barn after the flesh*, that is, by natural generation, or course of nature, before Abraham was too old for children; but Isaac was by virtue of God's promise, when by reason of age his parents were incapable of children. after the usual natural course. These two, Ishmael and Isaac, the Apostle says, were an *allegory*^h, or similitude, representing the *two covenants*; the one of the law delivered from *mount Sinai*, signified by the bondwoman Hagar, which tendeth to *bondage*, and answers to the *earthly Jerusalem*, or the Jewish church; the other is the covenant established by Christ, represented by the freewoman Sarah, and answers to the *heavenly Jerusalem*, or the Christian churchⁱ, and tendeth to *freedom*. Now we who believe in Christ *are the children of the promise*, and as it were of the freewoman, as was Isaac, and so are free from the yoke of the law: we are therefore to *stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*^k, for that faith in Christ will save, provided it be after the gospel way, that is, joined with a holy, spiritual life, or, *which worketh by love*^l. For although the Gospel be a state of *liberty* from the bondage of the ceremonial law; yet not *for an occasion to the flesh*^m, to satisfy the lusts thereof, and to neglect the holy duties of Christianity.

To which purpose, in the latter part of the Epistleⁿ, he exhorts them to prove their faith in that respect, as shewing the proper *fruits of the Spirit*, by avoiding the *sins of the flesh* which he mentions, and discharging the duties of a holy and Christian

^f Gen. xvii. 16. ^g Gen. xxi. 1, 2, 3. ^h See in part i. the third general remark on the Prophets. ⁱ As Heb. xii. 25. *Him that spake on earth*, i. e. Moses, is opposed to *him that speaketh from heaven*, i. e. Christ. ^k Chap. v. 1. ^l Verse 6. ^m Verse 13. ⁿ From chap. v. 13, &c.

conversation. Before he concludes, he takes notice of the reason why some Judaizing Christians were so desirous to have them *circumcised* according to the law^o, *that they might glory in their flesh*, in procuring them to be circumcised; whereby, for their pretended zeal in promoting the legal observances among the Gentiles, those false teachers might avoid persecutions from the Jews, who were in all places the violent persecutors of the Christian professors: whereas himself only gloried in the knowledge and profession of *the cross of Christ*, however it was so great a scandal to the Jews.

Observations on the Epistle to the Galatians.

1st, **THAT** the *days, and months, and times, and years*^p, which the Apostle reproves the Galatians for observing, were the Jewish sabbath-days, (and the strict ceremonial rest thereon,) their new moons, and solemn feasts of the passover, and the like, enjoined in Moses's law^q, which were only shadows of Christ and the Gospel, and could not be effectual to their justification by Christ, but rather a hindrance to it^r. Besides, such observances might *carry off* the Christian converts to the Jewish religion, and cause them to fall from Christianity. Now this does not at all forbid the Christian holy-days, as the memory of Christ's birth, and death, resurrection, &c. and of the holy Apostles and saints; the observance of which would tend to renew in our minds the benefit of our holy religion, and so keep us the more stedfast to it.

2dly, That *the liberty* which the Apostle here instructs the church to *stand fast in* is a freedom from the yoke of the old Levitical law, as circum-

^o Chap. vi. 12. ^p Chap. iv. 9, 10. ^q Compare Coloss. ii. 16, 17. ^r Chap. v. 4, &c.

cision, &c.* and not, as many fancy, a liberty of choosing what religion they please, and renouncing subjection to the governors of the church.

3dly, That to indulge ourselves in the sinful lusts of the flesh, is to live a heathenish life, and is utterly inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity, and the hopes of heaven†.

4thly, That idolatry (which is the giving to a creature, saint, or angel, or image, religious and divine worship) is reckoned by the Apostle amongst the most crying sins of adultery, drunkenness, witchcraft, &c.‡

*Design of the Epistle to the Ephesians, or the
Christians at Ephesus.*

EPHESUS was the metropolis or head city of the Proconsular Asia, (by which is meant a country on the western part of the Lesser Asia.) St. Paul had often been there, and had settled the Christian religion amongst them; which was from thence propagated throughout all that Asia^a. He being a prisoner at Rome^b, sent them this Epistle: the chief design of the first part whereof was to preserve them from the Judaizers, who held the necessity of observing the ceremonial law, and to that end, to put them in mind of God's infinite love to them in their redemption, and of their glorious privilege of being Christians; whereby, though they were, most of them, Gentiles by nature^c, and so *strangers to the covenant of the promise*, which God made with Abraham, and his posterity the Jews; yet now they were of *God's household*, as well as the believing

* Chap. v. 1, 2. † Chap. v. 16, &c. ‡ Chap. v. 19, 20, 21.
 § Acts xix. 10. and xx. 31. ¶ Eph. iii. 1. and Acts xxviii. 16. †† Chap. ii. 11.

Jews themselves, according to God's *purpose from the foundation of the world*, which he had made known by the Gospel; an evidence or seal of which was their receiving the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit; and therefore there was no necessity for them to observe the law of Moses, in order to their justification and salvation, (as the false teachers pretended there was,) for they were *saved* by the *grace* and mercy of God in Jesus Christ, and not by *works* of the law^d, and they were admitted to the same privileges with the rest of God's church. This doctrine of the salvation of the Gentiles by Christ, he tells them, God particularly revealed to him; and therefore encourages them in their faith in Christ. This is the substance of the three first chapters.

Afterwards^e, he presses them to live up to the Christian profession, by maintaining unity among themselves, that every one's gift and office might tend to the edification of the whole church, (according to God's purpose in vouchsafing the gifts, and establishing the Christian offices;) and by *putting off the old man*, not conforming to that corrupted state we derive from the *old* or *first Adam*, by avoiding their old heathenish sins; as lying, wrath, stealing, filthy discourses, envy and malice, uncharitableness, and variance, fornication and adultery, covetousness, and drunkenness: however, many of these might have been connived at, or allowed off^f, by their heathenish philosophers, yet they bring the wrath of God on the offenders. And on the contrary, that they *put on the new man*, conformable to that state of regeneration or grace wherein we are placed by faith in Christ, the second or new Adam, bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit in general, by

^d Chap. ii. 8, 9.

^e Chap. iv. to the end of the Epistle.

^f Grot. in chap. v. 4—8.

a circumspect and holy life ; to which they were the more obliged by that light and knowledge vouchsafed to them ; and also by performing the duties of their particular relations, whether as wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, masters ; concluding, that if they would stand fast in their Christian course against all temptations, their armour must be truth, righteousness, peaceableness, faith, hope, the holy word of God, and devout prayer.

Observations on the Epistle to the Ephesians.

THAT God's acceptance of us Gentiles, as well as of the posterity of Abraham, should engage us the more earnestly to cast off all vice, as what would deprive us of our privileges, and to be the more zealous to live answerable to our holy profession, and glorious hopes[§].

Design of the Epistle to the Philippians, or the Christians at Philippi.

PHILIPPI was an eminent city in Macedonia in Greece, where St. Paul had preached and converted many^h. They hearing of his imprisonment at Rome, made a collection for his relief, and sent it by Epaphroditus, who sickened at Rome, but recovered, and returned again to Philippiⁱ. By him St. Paul sent them this Epistle ; in which he kindly acknowledges their respects for him, and for the Gospel ; assuring them his imprisonment and troubles were a joy to him, because they tended, by his example

[§] Chap. iv. 17, &c.
and iv. 18.

^h Acts xvi. 12.

ⁱ Chap. ii. 25, &c.

of courage under them, to make the Gospel to be the more taken notice of, and furthered at Rome.

But the particular design of the Epistle appears to be the same with the former to the Ephesians; viz. To keep them stedfast in the true faith, both in respect to any persecutions they might suffer for the sake thereof, and also in respect to the Judaizing Christians; and, first, That they be not affrighted out of their holy professions in times of persecution, but stand fast in the faith; to which purpose he also very passionately, and with great earnestness, presses them to avoid dissension, and to maintain union; and to that end that they carry themselves humbly, and with lowly-mindedness one towards another, after Christ's example. This is the substance of the first and second chapters.

Then, secondly^k, he cautions them to beware of the Judaizers, who would plant the same evil doctrine there, as in other churches, concerning the obligation to the law of Moses, as to circumcision, and other Judaical rites, so often mentioned before. As for his part, none could lay more claim to the privileges which the Jews prized than himself; yet he accounted all such but *loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*: he propounds himself a pattern for their imitation in this respect, and in promoting unity and a true heavenly conversation: and, lastly, expresses his satisfaction in their charity towards him, and concludes.

Observations on the Epistle to the Philippians.

1st, **THAT** a forwardness and disposition to relieve Christians in distress was the temper of the ancient and first Christians^l. 2dly, That the Holy Ghost hath frequently shewed it to be a matter of great

^k Chap. iii. &c.

^l Chap. iv. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

moment, to avoid division, and to preserve unity in the church^m.

Design of the Epistle to the Colossians, or the Christians at Coloss.

COLOSS was a city in Phrygia, in the Lesser Asia. Though St. Paul had gone over all that countryⁿ, yet some believe he did not go to every particular city, and that he had not been at Coloss^o. That city had the Gospel preached to them by one Epaphras^r, whom St. Paul is supposed to have sent thither. The Apostle being a prisoner at Rome^q, and having understood by this Epaphras their state^r, sent them this Epistle, encouraging them^s in their Christian profession, and perseverance therein, after the same manner as he did to the Ephesians, from the consideration of God's love in making them who were Gentiles, and *sometime alienated*, equally with the Jews, *partakers* of salvation through Christ; and also cautioning them not to be deceived by those heretics, who corrupted^t the Christian religion by their pretended philosophyⁿ, containing a mixture of Jewish and Heathenish doctrines; who also imposed the observance of the law of Moses, as to circumcision, the Jewish festival days, new moons, and sabbaths, and unclean meats; and also on pretence of the majesty of God, and their own humility, pleading for the worshipping of angels, to procure them their mediators to God; and, lastly, pretending a more than ordinary self-denial and abstinence.

Against these, and such like, either Jewish or

ⁿ Chap. i. 27. ii. 1, 2, 3. and iii. 15, 16.

^q Acts xviii. 23.

^o From chap. i. 4. and ii. 1.

^p Chap. i. 7.

^r Chap. iv. 18.

^s Chap. i. 8.

^t Chap. i. ii.

^u Grot. in c. ii.

^v See the

fourth practical observation on 1 Cor.

Heathen ordinances, the Apostle cautions the Christians at Coloss^x.

Afterwards^y, he stirs them up, as before he had done the Ephesians, to a true Christian behaviour, by avoiding those their old heathenish sins he there mentions, that are contrary to a Christian profession, and labouring after such holy dispositions, as are agreeable to the Gospel of Christ; and also by performing the duties of their several relations, as husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. He concludes with an exhortation to earnest and constant prayer, and with some particular salutations.

Observations on the Epistle to the Colossians.

1st, **HERE** again the Apostle very evidently explains himself concerning the case of observing days, and declares he means the Jewish ordinances of new moons, and sabbath days, &c. which were a *shadow of things* under the Gospel^a.

2dly, That the idolatry of worshipping angels, under pretence of humility towards the great God, was the doctrine of the worst of heretics, who did not *hold the head*, that is, were not true members of Christ's body, the church^b.

3dly, That the fault which the Apostle checks some of the Colossians for, in being *subject to ordinances*, and the *commandments* and doctrines of *men*, and going back to the *rudiments of the world*, and the like, consisted in this; namely, their subjection to the Jewish ordinances so often mentioned before, and the doctrine and discipline of some heathen philosophers and conceited heretics, who pretended to a more perfect way, and stricter abstinence

^x Chap. ii. 16. to the end of that chapter. ^y Chapters iii. and iv. ^a Chap. ii. 16, 17. ^b Chap. ii. 18, 19.

than ordinary: this was not intended to disparage government, and subjection to the Christian church, or a compliance in what is decent, and for edification^c.

4thly, Nor doth the Apostle condemn *philosophy*^d, and human learning, as considered in itself; forasmuch as it is the great improver of our reason, and that which teaches us the knowledge of God and of virtue, as far as that arises from the nature of things in this world; insomuch that sound philosophy was, in the primitive times, often the^e foundation of Christianity, and was with great success made use of by the ancients in defending it, and convincing its gain-sayers: but philosophy is here spoken against, with respect to the abuse and corruption of it, as having espoused many fond and absurd principles, and abetted many undue practices; and therefore, the Apostle bids the first Christians *beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*.

5thly, To this purpose, (besides the medley of Judaism and Paganism, which was one effect of the vain philosophy of some heretics of those times mentioned in this chapter,) we may here reflect upon some other traditions of men, and rudiments of this world, which might occasion St. Paul to caution the Christians to beware of them: we read^f of two eminent sects of philosophers who encountered St. Paul, viz. the Epicureans and Stoics. The vain principles of the first of these were such as follow: they taught that the world was made by chance, and a casual concourse of atoms, (or small particles of matter meeting together;) that there was no providence of God, who would not trouble himself with men and

^c Chap. ii. 20, 21. ^d Verse 8. ^e As in Justin Martyr, and others. ^f Acts xvii. 18.

their affairs; that happiness consisted in sensual pleasures; that there was no future existence of souls, nor any life after this. The other sort, the Stoics, pretended a fatal and irrevocable necessity of actions and things, and that good was not to be done for a reward. These last put on an affected gravity and unconcernedness at surprising events and misfortunes; and generally, the philosophers were a set of people immoderately proud, desirous of fame, and given to wrangling and vain disputings. These and the like, to be sure, were doctrines and practices not after Christ; but still they were the rudiments and principles of some particular sects and persons, and a corruption of true philosophy and learning; which, without that corruption, enabled many primitive fathers and martyrs (as hath been already intimated) to become, through the assistance of the Divine Spirit, glorious champions for the Christian religion^g.

6thly, That the strict observation of the duties of our several relations, whether as husbands or wives, parents or children, masters or servants, is one principal part of our Christian religion^h.

*Design of the Two Epistles to the Thessalonians,
or the Christians at Thessalonica.*

THESSALONICA was the chief city of Macedonia in Greece, where St. Paul had planted a Christian church^a; which consisted of some converted Jews, and a great number of Gentiles, some of which are called *devout Greeks*, being probably proselytes of

^g See the fourth observation on the first Epistle to the Corinthians. ^h Chap. iii. 18, &c. ^a Chap. ii. 13. and Acts xvii. 1.

the gate^b. That a great part were Gentiles converted, appears from the Apostle's saying, they *turned to God from idols*^c. The Apostle understanding by Timothy their steadfastness, wrote this Epistle to confirm them in the Christian faith, which they had received from him, and in a perseverance therein, notwithstanding any tribulation or persecutions^d. (The Apostle might in particular mean that persecution, to which the unbelieving Jews, according to their usual manner, excited the Gentiles^e.) To this purpose, in the following chapters, he instructs them in a godly course of life, and comforts them with the glorious hopes of the resurrection, and of being *for ever with the Lord Jesus*: this should satisfy them in the midst of their concern for their deceased friends, especially if any were persecuted to death for the cause of religion.

He farther shews^f, that *the day of the Lord*, or the time of Christ's coming to judgment at the general resurrection^g, (of which he was treating just before in the latter part of the foregoing chapter,) was uncertain, and that it should surprise the ungodly world; but for those that are Christians, they need not be afraid, provided they lived as such, in that holy conversation, which he instructs them in, to the end of the first Epistle.

As to the second, St. Paul, in his former Epistle^h, had put the Christians of Thessalonica in hopes of coming again to them; but being prevented, he sent this second Epistle, much to the same purpose as the former, to encourage them in perseverance, and comfort them in their sufferings, shewing God's judgments on all those that *obey not the Gospel of*

^b Acts xvii. 1—5.

^c Chap. i. 9.

^d Chap. i. 2, 3.

^e Acts xvii. 5.

^f Chap. v.

^g See the eighth general remark on the Epistles, towards the latter end.

^h Chap. iii.

11.

our Lord Jesus Christ, but the glorious reward which waited for them that obeyed.

And, because they mistook his former Epistleⁱ about Christ's coming to judgment, lest they should be shaken in mind, because it was not to be immediately; he shews, in this second Epistle^k, that (according as he told them formerly) that terrible judgment was not to fall on the ungodly, till after some things came to pass, he now mentions, viz. a great apostacy or falling away from the faith, and the Anti-christ (or grand opposer of Christ) being more plainly discovered.

Some^l by the *coming of Christ*, and the *day of Christ*^m, understand the coming of Christ to destroy the unbelieving Jews and their temple, of which they suppose the Christians might be over inquisitive to know the time; in which sense the coming of Christ is usedⁿ. But yet this passage seems to refer to the same time which the like phrase doth four times in the former Epistle^o; and that is to the day of judgment.

Afterwards^p, the Apostle returns again to encourage and comfort them; giving them some instructions, particularly to avoid idleness, and the disorderly behaviour of some busy bodies; and then concludes with a Christian salutation.

Observations on the Epistles to the Thessalonians.

1st, **THAT** the hopes of being with Christ for ever in glory, was enough to support the primitive Christians under the greatest sufferings; we therefore should often encourage and comfort ourselves with

ⁱ In chap. v. 1, &c. ^k Chap. ii. ^l Grot. Ham. in 1 Thess. v. 2. ^m Mentioned chap. ii. 1, 2. and in the former Epistle, chap. v.

ⁿ Matt. xxiv. 2, 3. James v. 7, 8, 9. ^o Viz. chap. ii. 19. iii. 13. iv. 15. and v. 23. ^p Chap. ii. 13, &c.

these hopes, and so look above the world and the troubles of it^a.

2dly, The Apostle's charge^r, *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good*, hath been misunderstood by some, to encourage a running after various teachers, and ways of religious worship, under pretence of trying all religions first, before they settle; whereas the word *prove* doth not mean to practise or experience, but particularly to examine and enquire into all the spiritual gifts vouchsafed in those times, as of *prophesyings* mentioned in the foregoing verse, and that according to the gift of *discerning spirits* then in the church^s. So^t, *Try the spirits, whether they be of God*. If this precept, *Prove all things, &c.* be understood in general, then it signifies, examine and try the truth of every doctrine or practice, how it is agreeable to the proportion of faith, the doctrine of Christ taught by the Apostle, and then *hold fast that which is good*, or agreeable thereto.

Design of the Two Epistles to Timothy.

ST. PAUL had taken this Timothy to travel with him, and to assist him in planting the Gospel^a. He *put his hands* on him, which some interpret ordained him, with the assistance of the presbytery^b; as afterward in the primitive church^c, the bishops ordained with the assistance of the presbyters. At length the Apostle is said to constitute him bishop at Ephesus^d, the metropolis or head city in that part of Asia, which is called the Proconsular Asia; and some

^a 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, 18. 2 Thess. ii. 16. ^r 1 Thess. v. 21.

^s 1 Cor. xii. 10. ^t 1 John iv. 1. ^a Acts xvi. 3. ^b 2 Tim. i. 6. compared with 1 Tim. iv. 14. ^c Grot. in 1 Tim. iv. 24.

^d Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 4. Chrysost. Hom. 15. in 1 Tim. v. 19. Hammond on the title to 1 Tim. Cave's Life of Timothy.

time after that, he wrote this Epistle to him. He calls him his *son*, as being converted^e by him to the Christian religion, whereby the Apostle became his spiritual father. Timothy had been instructed in the holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, ever since he was a child, by his grandmother and mother, being both religious Jewesses, and also made converts to the Christian faith before him^f.

The design of the first Epistle appears^g, that Timothy might *know how to behave himself in the church of God*; that is, to instruct him how to discharge his great office, both as to his own behaviour, and also that of others, whether the inferior clergy or people; and how to order some part of the public service, by *supplications, prayers, and giving of thanks*; and warns him against some judaizing or other heretics and false teachers, particularly not to give heed to their fables^h and genealogiesⁱ, nor their doctrines *forbidding of marriage, and meats*^k.

There are three passages in this Epistle to be particularly considered. The first is^l, where the Apostle says that women should be in subjection to their husbands, because *the woman (Eve) being deceived, was in the transgression*; i. e. being tempted by the serpent the devil to eat the forbidden fruit^m, she was first prevailed on, and so became the means of man's fall; but for the comfort of the female sex, he affirms, that the woman *notwithstanding shall be saved in* (or byⁿ) *child-bearing*; which may import, either that she should go through child-bearing pangs with safety, or else her soul should be saved by child-bearing, that is, by Christ's being born of a woman, the Virgin Mary; whereby the same sex

^e Cave's Life of Timothy.

^f Acts xvi. 1. 2 Tim. i. 5.

^g Chap. iii. 14, 15.

^h See Grot. in chap. i. 4.

ⁱ Chap. i.

^k Chap. iv.

^l Chap. ii. 14, 15.

^m Gen. iii. 6.

ⁿ Δε

της τεκνογονίας.

became also instrumental to man's salvation, as before to his fall, to his destruction.

2dly, Among the characters of a bishop^o, one is, that he be *the husband of one wife*, which may be understood as having but one wife at a time^p, whereas the Gentiles, before their conversion, had sometimes two or three; which they might be permitted still to retain, even after they were baptized, to avoid confusion, (for which of them could the husband choose to part with?) though Christians were not suffered to be married to more than one, during the life of that one, after conversion: however, a plurality of wives was so far discouraged, that whoever had been married to more than one at the same time, while he was a Gentile, was not allowed to be put into the ministry, though he were a convert to Christianity. One objection against this interpretation is, that in this same Epistle^q, a widow was to be chosen into the service of the church, being *the wife of one man*; but a woman among the Gentiles was not allowed many husbands at once. It is replied, that here is a different case; and that if the phrase in this last passage^r cannot be so interpreted, it does not therefore follow that the other may not. Another sense of *the husband of one wife* may be^s, as not having divorced one wife, and taken another, as was usual among Jews and Gentiles. And this sense agrees with Chap. v. 9. for women were wont to divorce themselves, and marry another husband, among Jews and Gentiles also^t. As for a third interpretation, of not marrying a second wife after the death of the first, but continuing a widower; it is true, some ancient

^o Chap. iii. 2. ^p Gerhard. Loc. Com. tom. vii. de Conjugio, §. 214. Calvin in loc. Bishop Blackall's Sermon. vol. iil. p. 319. ^q Chap. v. 9. ^r In chap. v. ^s Hammond in loc. Dr. Whitby on 1 Tim. v. 9. and on 1 Cor. vii. 11. ^t Ibid.

canons enjoin this to the clergy, (at the first, no doubt, by reason of the heathen persecutions ;) but then the opinions and practice of the ancients varied in this matter ; some understanding the place, of those^y who had more wives than one at a time, or had put away one and married another. However, it is certain, some very ancient Catholic bishops were twice married^z, after the decease of a former wife. And since the end of marriage is not only for the propagation of children, but also mutual comfort, and a remedy against fornication, it cannot be conceived why a first marriage should be allowed for such ends, and not a second ; when there may be as much occasion, in order to such ends, for a second marriage, as for a first.

3dly, The *widow indeed*^a appears to be^b one who was altogether destitute; deprived of the help of husband or child, exemplary, pious, and devout ; of sixty years of age, the wife of one husband, (that is, either who had not been twice married ; or, as others, who had not formerly, before conversion, parted with one husband and married another, as was^c usual among the Jews and Heathen, as before observed. Such a one was to be received into the roll or list of those who were maintained by the church's alms ; and some of them were *servants of the church*, or deaconesses^d, who were to be employed for the relieving other destitute Christians out of the church's stock, and otherwise in the church's service : especially towards those of their own sex, as in sickness, or when they were baptized, &c. it being more decent for them to attend on their own sex on such occasions, than for deacons or other men to do it.

^y Chrysost. Theodoret in loc. ^z Tertul. de Monogamia, c. 18. See more in Mr. Bingham's Antiquities, book iv. chap. 5.

^a Mentioned chap. v. ^b Grotius and Whitby in loc. ^c Ibid.

^d As Phoebe was, Rom. xvi. 1.

The design of the second Epistle is again to stir up Timothy to be zealous and diligent in his office, patient in troubles, and constant in the holy doctrine which St. Paul had taught him ; as also to warn him against the false teachers, whether Jews or others, (as in the first Epistle,) of their sly behaviour, and their *foolish questions* and *fables* ; and to instruct him further how to behave himself, in imitation of St. Paul's own example, *manner of life*, and *patience*, that at last he might obtain with him a crown of life ; which St. Paul himself shortly expected ; *for he was ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand*^e.

The names of Jannes and Jambres, two Egyptian magicians, *who withstood Moses*, (when he wrought the miracles before Pharaoh^f;) are not mentioned by Moses in his history ; but they were ^gin some ancient records of the Jews, which were extant and known in the Apostle's time.

Design of the Epistle to Titus.

THIS Titus had been, it seems, converted to the Christian faith, or confirmed in it, by St. Paul ; who therefore calls him his son, (as he did Timothy.) Afterwards St. Paul is said^h to make him bishop of the island of Crete. The design of this Epistle is, like those to Timothy, to direct Titus how to discharge his office in ordaining others, and in opposing and censuring gainsayers, or false teachers, and heretics ; *especially they of the circumcision, with all Jewish fables, and foolish questions, and striv-*

^e Chap. iv. 6. ^f Chap. iii. 8. ^g Grotius and Hammond in loc. ^h Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 4. Chrysost. Hom. i. in c. 2. Hammond on the Title.

*ings about the law*ⁱ, whether of the Jews, or Judaizing Christians; and in teaching the people their duty.

Observations on the First and Second Epistles to Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus.

1st, **THAT** the government of the church by bishops was an apostolical ordinance, forasmuch as St. Paul placed Timothy bishop of Ephesus, and Titus bishop of Crete^k, as the ancients testify; and in these Epistles gave them instructions concerning the government of the inferior clergy, and the people in those churches; particularly, Timothy was empowered to discharge the office of a bishop, *viz.* to prove and admit others to the ministerial function^l, to encourage and reward them^m, and to exercise disciplineⁿ. And likewise to Titus was given episcopal authority, to *set in order* affairs of the churches, and *ordain elders*^o. By this, such who conceive the order of bishops not sufficiently prescribed in Scripture, (and therefore conceive it not absolutely necessary to the church,) may see plainly that the offices in government, ordination, and the exercise of discipline, are directly prescribed therein, as belonging to one single person, (though they are more fully explained and cleared in the accounts of the primitive church;) nor is there any more reason to pretend that Timothy and Titus were particular and occasional officers, than that the Epistles, which were written to them, were only particular and occasional writings: but the Christian church preserving these Epistles, as of constant and perpetual use, did thereby suppose

ⁱ Chap. i. 10. and iii. 9. ^k As it hath been said before.
See also Dr. Cave's Lives of Timothy and Titus. ^l 1 Tim.
iii. 10. ^m Chap. v. 17. ⁿ Chap. v. 19, 20, 21. ^o Titus
i. 5.

the same kind of office to continue, for the sake whereof those excellent Epistles were written. And we have no greater assurance that these Epistles were written by St. Paul, than we have that there were bishops to succeed the apostles in the care and government of the churches¹: and St. Chrysostom gives this as the reason why, of all his disciples and followers, St. Paul wrote Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and not to Silas or Luke; because he had committed to them the care and government of churches, while he reserved the others as attendants and ministers to go along with himself². Once more; "Either there was at Ephesus and Crete a presbytery, that is, a college of presbyters, with a power of ordaining presbyters and deacons without a bishop, or there was not; if there were such colleges with such a power, then was there no need of St. Paul's sending Timothy and Titus thither for that purpose; but if there were not, then had Timothy and Titus the sole power of ordination in those places, by apostolical commission³:" and even where there were presbyters already settled, as they were at Ephesus⁴, some few years before St. Paul wrote to Timothy. It is true indeed, that Timothy often accompanied St. Paul in planting churches, and the Apostle sent for him to Rome⁵, and also charged him⁶ to *do the work of an evangelist*, or a propagator of the Gospel in divers countries; yet that only shews, that Timothy was by the Holy Ghost employed in both offices at different times, viz. to propagate the Gospel, and also to govern a particular church; for it is evident, that the gift of government was distinct from that of an evangelist⁷.

¹ Bishop Stillingfleet's Cases, edit. 2. p. 8. Bishop Beveridge's Codex Can. Eccles. Prim. l. ii. c. 11. and Bishop Potter's Government of the ancient Church, chap. iv. ² Chrysost. Argument, in 1 Tim. ³ Reliqu. Carolin, p. 307. ⁴ Acts xx. 17. ⁵ 2 Tim. iv. 9. ⁶ 2 Tim. iv. 5. ⁷ 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11.

2dly, That the first Christians were subject to their bishops, and guided by them in matters of religious behaviour; otherwise St. Paul had in vain given Timothy and Titus those directions for government.

3dly, That to pray to saints and angels to procure their intercession for us, is against the Apostle's doctrine, who has declared, that as there is but *one God*, so *there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*^v. The Papists pretend, that they make the saints only mediators of intercession, as if they desired the saints only to pray to God for them: but their authorized catechism teaches, that the saints are to be prayed to, because "God bestows blessings on us for their merits and favour"; and their practice is accordingly; which makes the saints sharers in the mediation of redemption, and is the greatest affront and dishonour to Christ, by whose merits alone our prayers are heard.

4thly, That the doctrines of purgatory, (by which the Papists understand a purgation by torments, of such as indeed depart in the faith of Christ, but yet must suffer a temporal punishment,) and of praying for deliverance of the deceased from the torments of it, or for ease under them, are not countenanced by St. Paul's charitable prayer for Onesiphorus, whom they suppose to have been then dead^a; *The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day*. For, first, it does not appear certainly that Onesiphorus was then dead, from St. Paul's mentioning^b his house, or household only, himself possibly being then absent, and not returned from Rome to Ephesus. But, secondly, supposing him

^v 1 Tim. ii. 5. ^a Catechismus ad Parochos, pars 3. ad primum præceptum, de Invocatione Sanctorum, §. 24. multaque eorum merito et gratia in nos Deus confert beneficia,

^b 2 Tim. i. 18. ^b Verse 16. and chap. iv. 19.

to be then dead, St. Paul's prayer was not for deliverance from torment in the state between death and the resurrection, (which is the supposed torment of the popish purgatory,) but for mercy *in that day*, the same day he had before mentioned ^c, viz. the great day of judgment. But mercy in purgatory, if it do them any good, must be (according to their own doctrine) before that day.

5thly, That a wilful sinner vainly encourages himself from St. Paul's acknowledging ^d that he was the chief of sinners; that being spoken not in relation to what he was then, but what he had been before his conversion to Christianity, when ^e he was *a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious*, in opposition to the holy religion of Jesus. That was his chief sin, not an habitual practice of any vice. As to such he declared on the contrary ^f, *Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man*.

6thly, That blessing the table, or saying grace, that is, the craving a blessing from God on our food, and thanksgiving afterwards, is a necessary and Christian practice, encouraged by St. Paul; who hath taught us ^g, that *every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God*, (which hath allowed it for food ^h,) *and prayer*. From the command ⁱ, *When thou hast eaten, and art full, thou shalt bless the Lord thy God*, the Jews always say grace ^k; as our Saviour did ^l, *he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, &c.* So did also the ancient Christians ^m;

^c Verse 12.

^d Chap. i. 15.

^e As verse 13. going before.

^f Acts xxiv. 16.

^g 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

^h Gen. ix. 3.

ⁱ Deut.

viii. 10.

^k P. Fagius in loc. Buxtorf. Synagog. Judæorum,

c. 12. Leo Modena, pars ii. c. 10.

^l Matt. xiv. 9.

^m Non

prius discumbitur quam oratio ad deum prægustetur. Tertul. Apolog. c. 39.

may, even the very Heathens had such a custom ; and the contrary practice of too many, of devouring the creatures which the good God hath made and preserved for our use, and by whose blessing it is that we are nourished and refreshed by them, without either looking up to heaven for a blessing, or returning thanks for them, is most indecent, unchristian, and atheistical.

Design of the Epistle to Philemon.

THIS Philemon is said to be a considerable personⁿ at Coloss : he had been converted by St. Paul, as is probable from ver. 19. The occasion of this Epistle was thus ; Philemon had a servant named Onesimus, who ran away from him, and in his ramble was got as far as to Rome ; there St. Paul, being a prisoner, met with him, and converted him to the faith ; which is the meaning of that in ver. 10. *whom I have begotten in my bonds.* St. Paul writes this Epistle, and sends Onesimus with it to his master Philemon : in it he rejoiceth in Philemon's persisting in the faith of Christ, and shewing so good an effect of it, by his charitable refreshing the poor Christians ; but the chief design was to request Philemon to entertain once more his old servant Onesimus, and to forgive him the former injury, as one that now, being a Christian, would be the more faithful and diligent.

Observations on the Epistle to Philemon.

1st, **THAT** the embracing an opportunity of doing a good turn to another, (how mean soever he may be,)

ⁿ Hammond on the title.

as to soul or body, is a most Christian apostolical practice. How careful was St. Paul, first to convert this vagabond servant, and then to restore him to his master's favour.

2dly, That it is the duty of a master to forgive and be reconciled to an injurious and negligent servant, on his repentance, submission, and reformation.

Design of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

THE author of this Epistle was St. Paul, as the most ancient fathers declare¹. He doth not indeed begin with his name, as in other Epistles, *Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ*, (as it is supposed,) for this reason, because he was made an apostle not so much of the circumcision, that is, of the Jews, (to whom this Epistle was sent,) as of the Gentiles, who were most properly his charge². Again³, we read that the author had Timothy for his companion, and wrote from Italy, and entreated the Hebrews to pray for him, that he might *be restored* to them *the sooner*; all which most agrees with St. Paul's circumstances, and manner of writing⁴.

Lastly, In the forementioned chap. xiii. of this Epistle, he calls Timothy *our brother Timothy*, as it was customary with St. Paul to call him, when he wrote to others⁵.

By the Hebrews, are probably meant in this place those of the Jewish people who had received the faith, and lived in or near their own country Judea. Many of these were in danger of falling away upon a two-

¹ Du Pin of the Canon on this Epistle. Dr. Mill's Prolegom. p. 10, &c. and p. 26. ² Acts xxii. 21. Rom. xi. 13.

³ In chap. xiii. of this Epistle, verse 18. to the end. ⁴ For which see Philemon, verse 1. Rom. xv. 30, 31. 2 Thess. iii. 1.

⁵ 2 Cor. i. 1. Col. i. 1.

fold account; either, first, being staggered by the arguments of the unbelieving Jews, who were zealous for the law of Moses, and maintained the excellency and necessity of the old legal institutions and sacrifices, which were at first appointed by God, who had wrought so many miracles among them, and sent so many prophets to direct and encourage the observation of those very ordinances, and that for so many ages past: or, secondly, because, whatever Jews were converted to Christianity, they were most bitterly persecuted, through the assistance or connivance of the Roman power, by their unbelieving brethren and countrymen^y; insomuch, that some had already forsaken the Christian public assemblies^z. Now this being the case, the Apostle labours to keep them steady in their Christian profession; to which purpose^a, he sets forth the excellency of Christ, as to his nature, he being the Son of God, and far above angels, according to the prophecy in the book of Psalms concerning him: that the account which his apostles gave of him was sufficiently confirmed by *signs and wonders, and divers miracles* wrought by them in confirmation of their doctrine: that he took on him the nature of man in *the seed of Abraham*, that so by suffering death himself, he might (through the value of his precious blood) both make void the design of the devil, (to keep men under the power of eternal death,) and also by sufferings *be made like* unto us, and be thereby the more inclined, and the better qualified to compassionate and succour us: that he was more excellent than Moses, who indeed *was faithful*, yet was but like *a servant* in another house: and though Joshua gave the Israelites rest in Canaan, yet *the rest* which Christ gives in heaven.

^y 1 Thess. ii. 14, 15.
ii. iii. and iv. to verse 14.

^z Heb. x. 25.

^a In chapter i.

is far more excellent; which we should therefore *labour to enter into.*

Further^b, the Apostle shews the excellency of Christ's priesthood, particularly, that in him two famous prophecies in the book of Psalms are fulfilled; such as, first, ^c *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, (by raising him from the dead, in order to be an heavenly Priest and King^d.) The second prophecy is Psal. cx. 4. (wherein is a confirmation by an oath,) *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck.* Aaron's priesthood had its beginning in Moses's law, and the priests after his order died, and wanted others to succeed them; but our Lord is the only *priest after the order of Melchisedeck*; that is, a priest who had no ordination from man, and also who never shall die, or want a successor, but continues for ever, (as there is no account given of Melchisedeck's father, descent, or posterity, nor of any beginning or end, or succession in his office, as is of the priests under the law.) And farther, as Melchisedeck was a king and priest too, (as was usual in the first ages of the world,) so Christ, a king as well as a priest, hath full power for ever to bless all his church; and since God dealt with their father Abraham, not only by promise, but *an oath*^e, in like manner we have an assurance by both those immutable things (a promise and an oath) of Christ's eternal priesthood; not *after the order of Aaron*, and of *the tribe of Levi*, but *after the order of Melchisedeck.* Now, *if perfection were by the Levitical priesthood*, as it was in *the law*, *what further need was there, that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedeck*, as it must be by virtue of the ancient prophecy: and this change of

^b In chap. iv. 14. and chap. v. &c. to the ixth. ^c Psal. ii. 7.
As Acts xiii. 33. ^e Gen. xxii. 16, 17.

the priesthood, from Aaron to Melchisedeck, argues a change also of the law. And; which is further to be considered, priests indeed received tithes of their brethren; but so great a priest was Melchisedeck, the type of Christ, that *even the patriarch Abraham* (and so Levi, as being in his loins) *paid him tithes*, and received a blessing from him; and sure *the less is blessed of the greater*. Again, the Apostle argues, that Christ, our High-Priest, had no sin of *his own*, like the Levitical priests, to *offer up sacrifice* for; but is the *holy and undefiled* Son of God, who, having made one sufficient offering for sins, *is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*; and not only so, but Christ is a *Mediator of a better covenant* than Moses could be under the law, (as Jeremiah foretold^s,) not on the performance of an outward ceremonial, but an inward true righteousness, which by his grace he would work *in their hearts*.

Then as for *sacrifices*^h, that sacrifice of himself, which Christ offered on the cross, was more effectual by far than all the oblations and sacrifices appointed by the law of Moses. Aaron indeed once a year entered into the holy of holies, in the tabernacle on earth; but that was only a shadow of heaven, into which Christ, our High-Priest, is entered, to make intercession for us: so also the gifts and sacrifices under the law were as types or figures, and *shadows*, to signify Christ the great and true sacrifice; and those legal typical sacrifices of the blood of bulls and goats, &c. cleansed them indeed from legal pollutions, (that is, the defilements by their eating unclean meats, or neglecting such and such washings, &c.) but could not of themselves make atonement for, or *take away*, the guilt of *sins*, so as that no farther sacrifice should be needful: that was done by the precious

^s Chap. xxxi. 31, &c.

^h Chap. ix. x.

blood of Christ, the eternal Son of God ; and therefore they ought to keep stedfast to their Christian profession, otherwise the danger would be great, even to their utter destruction.

This so dangerous effect of apostacy the Apostle twice mentions ; first¹, where he tells them, it would be *impossible to renew them again to repentance*, if, after having been *enlightened*^k with the knowledge of Christ, and baptized, and (as a consequence thereof) endued with the divine Spirit, and made *partakers* of the miraculous gifts of the *Holy Ghost*, they should now designedly, and out of a perverse hatred of Christ and the Gospel, cast off their holy religion, and so become apostates from Christianity, and fall back to Judaism ; whereby they would resist all the evidence that God designed, or could be offered for their conviction ; and *crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame*, (their casting off the Christian religion being as a confessing that Christ was justly crucified.) The like dangerous effect of apostacy the Apostle repeats^l, assuring them, *There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment*, for all such who should disown or slight the *blood* of Christ, and the *Holy Spirit of God* ; there being no other principles of any true religion that can be serviceable to their salvation, no other means than those which they have forsaken, no other sacrifice for expiating sin, no second baptism, nor any other Holy Spirit or grace renewing their minds : and therefore, he exhorts them to perseverance, notwithstanding any difficulties or sufferings^m ; which as

¹ In chap. vi. 4, 5, 6. ^k *ΕΝΦΩΤΙΣΤΕΣ* (enlightened) signifies those who, having been instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and then baptized, were further enlightened by the divine Spirit. Just. Martyr. Apol. 1. edit. Grabe, §. 80. et Annotat. Kortholt. in loc. ^l Chap. x. 26, &c. ^m Chap. x. 32, &c. to chap. xi.

they did not hinder them at the first from becoming Christians, though *they endured a great fight of afflictions*, so now should not, from persevering as such; that they might receive the promise: forasmuch as God would *not tarry*, but would both shortly deliver them, and eternally reward them: in the mean time, that they *live by faith*, until they should actually possess the promise, to the *saving of the soul*. What has been hitherto mentioned is the substance of the Epistle, from the beginning to the eleventh chapter.

And to the intent they might so *live by faith*, and at length *save their souls*, he goes on^a to set before them the power of the grace of faith, and proposes the example of the saints in former times. This *faith*, he tells them, *is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*^o; that is, a confident dependence upon God for the performance of his promise, though for the present we do not see it. Thus the servants of God were renowned of old; of which he gives so many instances throughout the eleventh chapter; and then tells them^p, that all these examples of faith and constancy ought to be encouragements to them, to *run on with patience* in their Christian *race*; especially seeing Christ himself, *the Author and Finisher of our faith*, or the Leader and Crowner thereof, by *resisting unto blood*, or suffering death, (which yet they had not done,) by his own sufferings sanctified afflictions in this life, in order to a glorious reward in heaven. Nay, even for the present, those very persecutions and afflictions, at worst, are the badges and tokens of God's fatherly love to us, rather *chastening us as his children*, than that we should lose his eternal bliss.

Afterwards^q he instructs them to adorn their

^a Chap. xi. ^o Verse 1. ^p Chap. xii. 1—14. ^q Chap. xii. 14, &c. to the end of that chapter.

Christian profession by what is very becoming it, namely, peace and holiness ; being free from hatred and variance, and impure lusts of the flesh ; and (which was all along the main design) to take heed that no one amongst them be so profane a person, who, like *Esau that sold his birthright*, should despise and cast off their glorious privileges in Christ Jesus, and their interest in the Gospel, and in being members of Christ's holy church, with the benefits of the new covenant through Christ's blood : which he expresses after the Jewish manner, by the figurative terms of *mount Zion*, and the *heavenly Jerusalem*, with the dignity of being members of *the general assembly*, (not consisting of one nation only, as that of the Israelites on mount Sinai, but of all, both Jews and Gentiles,) with *an innumerable company of angels*, and *the church of the first-born*, (of apostles and others, who first received the Gospel,) whose names *are written*, or enrolled, in *heaven*, &c. These privileges were infinitely more valuable than the law given in mount Sinai, in such a frightful and terrifying manner, with burnings, and thunderings, and lightnings ; nor could that dispensation under the law continue without *removing* ; but the happiness under the Gospel *cannot be moved*, but shall always *remain*.

Lastly ^r, he gives them sundry particular directions for a Christian life and behaviour, and then again encourages them to persevere in the faith, and to obey the governors of the church, who *had the rule over them* ; and also cautions them against being seduced by their former leaders, who, whilst they adhere to the Levitical sacrifices, have no right to partake of the sacrifice of Christ's death, nor of the Lord's table, the Christian altar, where that is set forth ; no more than they could eat of the bodies or

^r Chap. xiii. 1, &c.

flesh of the sin-offering under the law, which was *burnt without the camp*^a, and was a type or representation of our sin-offering, which Jesus made *with his own blood*, when he also (according to that representation of him) *suffered without the gate. Unto him therefore we are to go*, not relying upon the Mosaical law, but the cross of Christ. Afterwards the Apostle, requesting their prayers for him, and beseeching God to keep them in his service and favour, concludes this excellent Epistle.

Observations on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

1st, **IT** is here plainly and distinctly declared, that the Levitical ordinances in Moses's law were shadows of Christ the substance; and therefore that those Mosaical ordinances are abolished (or rather cease of themselves) since Christ's appearing in the world^a.

2dly, That the design of Christ's death was not only to testify to the truth of his doctrine, or to give us an example of patience, or in order to his resurrection, that he might obtain power to redeem and sanctify us, or to confirm our faith and hopes of pardon, (as some have pretended;) but chiefly to *make*^b *a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for our sins*. For in this Epistle the Apostle shews, that the death of Christ was shadowed by the expiatory sacrifices under the law; from which the Jews expected this benefit, viz. that the beast slain and sacrificed would be accepted in their stead, to excuse them from punishment^c. Now the

^a Exod. xxix. 14.
chap. xiii. 9—14.

^b See the first ten chapters, and also Grot. de Satisfactione, c. i. 10. ^c Obj. Expiatio in sacrificiis, non de ipsa mactatione pecudis, quæ revera fuisset luitio illa, seu pænæ persolutio; sed de iis dicitur quæ mactationem consequerentur, ut de aspersione sanguinis. Resp. Pœna pecudi irrogabatur, cum pecudi vita adimebatur; sed Deo ritu sacrificali soluta fuit, cum vita animæ pecudis Deo, more sacrificali, reddebatur. *Outram de Sacrificiis.*

Apostle here shews, that the death of Christ is truly all that which they expected their legal sacrifices to be, that is, such as did *bear the iniquity*, the faults and punishments of the sinner, and *make an atonement* for them^d. So Christ *was once offered to bear the sins of many*; and *hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*^e.

The style and common phrases that were under the law, concerning sacrifices for sin, as *propitiation*, an *atonement*, *bearing sins*, a *ransom*, &c. were well known in the New Testament times^f, both among Jews and Gentiles; now the apostles assure us, in the same style and phrases, of the benefit of Christ's death, *viz.* that he died in our stead, to offer himself truly a sacrifice for sins, when they say that Christ's death was a *propitiation*, (which is a sacrifice to appease God's anger^g;) and an *atonement*, (which signifies a purging from sin^h;) a being *offered to bear sins*ⁱ, and, lastly, a giving himself a *ransom for us*^k. The apostles wrote plainly, and it was of great concern they should, and that age could no otherwise understand them.

3dly, In the Papist's sacrifice of the mass, or sacrament of the Lord's Supper, they pretend to offer up to God the Father the body and blood of his Son Christ, as being substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine, (according to the false doctrine of *transubstantiation*^l), and therefore affirm their said oblation in the mass to be in itself, or in its own virtue, *a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead*. This is directly contrary to the doctrine of St. Paul, who says^m, that Christ *offered one sacrifice for sins* upon

^d Lev. i. 4. and iv. 26. and x. 17.

^e See the first ten

chapters of this Epistle.

^f Grotius *ibid.*

^g 1 John ii.

^h Rom. v. 11.

ⁱ Heb. ix. 28.

^k 1 Tim. ii. 6.

^l For

which see the 7th and 8th observations on 1 Cor.

^m Chap.

x. 10, 12, 14.

the cross, and that *by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. That *by perfecting for ever*, St. Paul means the making a propitiation for, and expiating sins, appears from the testimony of the prophet, which he produces to confirm this ^a, *their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*. Now if Christ on the cross hath made a perfect and complete atonement, propitiation, and satisfaction for sins, by his one offering of himself, and once for all, as St. Paul says he did, there is no occasion for the repetition of such a sacrifice, as there was for the Jewish sacrifices ^o; and therefore the Popish mass, and their sacrifice, which is so great a part of their religious worship, and on which they so much depend for their well-being in this world and in the next, and with the want of which they upbraid the Protestants, hath no foundation in the holy Scriptures, but is contrary to it.

And as for the notion of the ancient Christians ^p, though they call the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper a *sacrifice*, yet in their opinion there is not *the thing itself*, viz. a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's real body, in the Papist's sense; but a *commemoration* ^q, or representing thereof, by *shewing forth the Lord's death* ^r, as it were, *setting before the Father* the sacrifice of his Son's death for the sins of the world, and *pleading the merit thereof* for pardon and acceptance, to the great comfort of the faithful. In this sense they esteemed, that, in the sacrament, Christ is *mystically*, as he is said to be, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world* ^s, and that was not verily and indeed, but in a mystery: so the Eucharist is a

^a Chap. x. 16, 17. ^o Verse 11. ^p Forbesius Hist. Theol. 1. xi. c. xx. §. 21, 22. Mede's Christian Sacrifice, and his Discourse of the Name *Altar*. ^q As Luke xxii. 19. ^r As 1 Cor. xi. 26. ^s Rev. xiii. 8.

commemorative, or representative sacrifice, because it is a commemorating, or representing of the only true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice in the creatures of bread and wine, with prayers and praises, according to Christ's institution, in order to partake of mercy and pardon through the same: for which cause they reckoned that their prayers, for themselves or others, were then more effectual. In which sense the ancient Christians, even from the purest antiquity, understand this prophecy [†], *In every place incense shall be offered in my name, and a pure offering*; and also that part of Christ's sermon [‡], *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, &c.* and that of the Apostle [§], *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle*[‡]. In a word, this whole matter is thus explained by two of the most eminent fathers of the church; the one is St. Chrysostom on these words [§], *Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. "What then (says he) do we offer every day? He answers, We offer indeed, but it is by making a commemoration of his death; and this sacrifice is one, and not many, because it was once offered; not as that which was carried into the holy of holies; that was a figure of this. We offer not another, not a different sacrifice, as the Jewish high-priest did of old, but still one and the same, or rather we perform the remembrance of a sacrifice." The other ancient father is St. Austin[¶]: "The flesh and blood (says he) of this sacrifice, before Christ's coming, was promised by the sacrifice of resemblance; in his passion, it was really and truly given: after his ascension, it is celebrated (*per sacramentum memorie*)

[†] Mal. i. 11. [‡] Matt. v. 23, 24. [§] Heb. xiii. 10. [¶] For all which, see the authors last cited. [‡] Heb. ix. 26. [¶] Contra Faustum Manichæum, l. xx. c. 21.

by a sacrament of commemoration." This being a matter of great importance, hath been thus laid plain before the English reader.

4thly, That the *wilful sin* threatened^b, after which, *it is impossible to renew them again to repentance*, because for such *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of indignation*, &c. is not every lapsing in time of persecution, nor the profaning of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, nor yet the falling into great sins through temptation; all which may be timely and truly repented of and pardoned; but an utter renouncing Christ's religion, a casting him off, and maliciously reproaching Christ, and relapsing into Judaism or Heathenism: for the Apostle is warning the converted Jews from falling off again to their former Jewish religion; and those who should thus become apostates, he says, *fall away*, and, as it were, *crucify the Son of God afresh*; nay, *have trodden under foot the Son of God*; and there is no other besides who can relieve them: so that this dreadful passage ought not to drive other sinners into despair, who do not finally fall away from the Christian faith and hope, but repent and reform. This is evident from the place itself, because it is not declared to be impossible to renew or recover such, because God would not accept their repentance; but because the persons here described by the Apostle are supposed not to be renewed to repentance.

5thly, That no one can have such grounds of comfort in trouble as a good Christian; for his troubles and sufferings make him so much the more like unto God's servants, as being the afflictions of the people of God; and even to Jesus Christ himself, who will reward all his followers, and crown

^b Chap. vi. 4, &c. and x. 26, &c.

their faith and patience with eternal joy and glory : and in the mean time, such a servant of Christ can comfort himself, that God is his Father, and will deal with him accordingly, and order all for his everlasting good^c.

Thus much for the Epistles of St. Paul.



Design of the General Epistle of St. James.

THIS James, as the ancients affirm^d, was one of the twelve apostles, and was called *the brother of our Lord*^e, either because he was (as many of the ancients write) the son of Joseph by a former wife, or because nearly related to the Virgin Mary; for the Jews called relations *brethren*. He is also called James the Less, to distinguish him from the other James, whom Herod beheaded. After our Lord's ascension into heaven, he was bishop of Jerusalem^f. This holy man was not content to take care of the Christians only in and about Jerusalem, but also sent this Epistle *to the twelve tribes scattered abroad*, or that were dispersed into other parts : and therefore it is called a General Epistle, the copies thereof being handed up and down in several places. Some of the admonitions in this Epistle seem intended for all the dispersed Israelites, or the twelve tribes in general ; but the most for those of them who were converted Christians, and who lived intermixed with their brethren who were not converted. There were also doubtless among the Christian converts some Judaizers, like those^h who were *zealous for the law*, of which mention hath been often made before.

^c Chap. xi. and xii. ^d Cave of St. James the Less. ^e Matt. xiii. 55. Gal. i. 19. ^f Cave, *ibid.* and Bishop Pearson on the Creed, artic. 3. ^g Euseb. Hist. l. ii. c. 1. Cave, *ibid.* ^h Acts xxi. 20.

Because the true Christians were constantly liable to sundry troubles and persecutions, especially from their old enemies the unbelieving Jews; the Apostle, in the beginning of this Epistle, exhorts them to patience under all their troubles; as being *trials* of the sincerity of their faith, and what would be recompensed with a *crown of life*. Again, the Christian religion was in danger to be abused by the loose doctrines and practices of some pretended Christians and heretics, in particular the followersⁱ of Simon Magus, (spoken of before on the Acts,) who wresting St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith only, (that is, without the pretence of merit, or the works of the ceremonial law,) pretended that they might do what they list, and encouraged men to depend on a naked belief of Christ's religion, as if faith would save them without holiness and good works.

Against these the Apostle cautions the true Christians, and presses the renouncing of all impiety and filthy lusts; and also warns them against a dependence on a partial observance only of God's laws; against despising the poor, strife and envying, covetous desires, bitter words, pride, a dependence on and confidence in this world, forgetting the uncertainty of this life, and a hearing the word without doing it; and on the other hand, exhorts to the practice of Christian virtues, such as kindness, mutual love, peaceableness, humility, &c. And, in general, proves that a bare faith without charity, and such other good works as the Gospel requires, is *dead* and worth nothing. He instances in Abraham their forefather, who was justified not only by his *faith* in believing God's promise, but also by his *works*, which proceeded from that faith, when he

ⁱ Irenæus, l. i. c. 90. Dr. Mill's Prolegom. p. 7. See also the fifth and sixth general remarks on the Epistles.

obeyed God in offering his son Isaac ; so also Rahab was justified, not only by her faith in believing that the Lord had given the Israelites the land of Canaan, but by her works in preserving the messengers who were sent to spy it out¹. *The wars and fightings*^k seem more especially to note the factions, mutinies, and uproars among the Jews of that age in general ; who, pretending to be a free people, could not easily bear subjection under the Romans, or any others : such mutinyings occasioned many massacres among them, as Josephus shews¹ ; and most likely, some who called themselves Christians, were carried away with the common prejudices of that people in general, and might too much countenance the tumults so frequent among the whole body of the Jews.

In the beginning of the fifth chapter, the Apostle seems to tax the unbelieving Jews, for their covetous hoarding, oppressions, and persecution of the Christians ; and to threaten them with Christ's speedy coming to execute judgment on them, when they should be miserably slaughtered, and spoiled of all their treasures, as it came to pass not long afterwards ; and thence he encouraged the true Christians to be patient, and to wait for deliverance ; and by the way, charged them to avoid an evil custom got among the Jews, of swearing by heaven and earth, &c. in their ordinary communications.

Lastly^m, he instructs them what to do in the midst of the various accidents of this life ; if they are *afflicted*, to pray ; if *merry* or prosperous, to praise God ; if *sick*, to send for *the elders*, the bishops or presbyters, *of the church*, that they might have the

¹ Josh. ii. For reconciling this with St. Paul's justification by faith only, in his Epistle to the Romans and Galatians, see the first, fifth, and sixth general remarks on the Epistles.

^k Chap. iv. 1. ¹ Wars, book ii. ch. 19, 20. ^m Chap. v. 13, to the end.

benefit both of their *prayers*, for the forgiveness of their sins, and also of the *anointing with oil in the name of the Lord Jesus*, which, being added to the prayer, would, by an extraordinary gift in those primitive times, miraculously heal diseasesⁿ. Sick persons were also to *confess their faults one to another*, or acknowledge their sins, which might occasion their sickness, in order to procure prayers, that such sins might *be forgiven them*, and they might be healed. It is not here expressly mentioned^o, whether this *confession of faults one to another*^p, is to be understood to be made to the *elders of the church*, whom they were to send for^q, the words *one to another* being sometimes limited according to the preceding matter; as^r, *submitting one to another*, is meant of inferiors to superiors, as in the following instance of wives to their husbands^s: and^t, *use hospitality one to another*, can be meant only of the rich to their equals and the poor; or, whether the sick was to confess his sins to any Christian brethren, who should visit him in the presence of the elder, to procure their prayers for the pardon of such sins, and the restoring him to health; the constant practice of the ancients, and the connection of this passage^u with the foregoing^x inclines us to understand^y the confession to be made to *the elders of the church*, who were to be sent for, and to *pray over the sick*^z, not in the Romanist's sense, either in respect to their sacrament of penance, or extreme unction; but that the visiting pastor, as a spiritual physician, might be informed of the state of his sick penitent, and accordingly know how to apply to him, pray for him, and comfort him by ministerial abso-

ⁿ Mark vi. 13. ^o See Dr. Hammond on the Place, and Dr. Comber on the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, §. 2. rubr. 5. ^p Ver. 16. ^q Ver. 14. ^r Eph. v. 21. ^s Ver. 22. ^t 1 Pet. iv. 9. ^u Ver. 16. ^x Ver. 14, 15. ^y Dr. Wells. ^z Ver. 14.

lution; in which sense the words have been thus paraphrased, *Confess your faults one to another*, that is, the sick to the ministers of the church; and *pray one for another*, that is, the minister for the sick^a.

The Apostle concludes with encouragement to all those who (on such occasion of sickness, or any other) shall be instrumental to the conversion of a sinner.

Observations on the Epistle of St. James.

1st, **THAT** this Apostle fully and evidently declares the will of God to be this: That all who believe in Christ, live holy lives, and carefully perform good works; otherwise their faith and profession are utterly vain^b.

2dly, That since our lives are so uncertain, it is a very unaccountable thing to be always hoarding up for this world^c.

3dly, That oppressing the poor, and unjust exaction, is an *heaping up* to ourselves an heavier damnation^d.

4thly, That the Papists' *extreme unction*, where-with they anoint dying persons, in order to the salvation of their souls, hath no foundation in the primitive practice of *anointing the sick with oil*^e; for this was in order to the *saving the sick* from death, and *raising him up*, and the *having those sins forgiven*, which had provoked God to inflict a bodily disease upon him; and so for the recovery, and miraculous *healing* of the sick person; which gift hath long since ceased: whereas the Romish church appoint anointing, when they suppose the sick past recovery, in order to his salvation in the next world, without appointment or promise in the holy Scriptures.

^a Dr. Wells. ^b Chap. ii. ^c Chap. iv. 13, 14. ^d Chap. v. 1—6. ^e Mentioned chap. v. 14, 15.

Design of the two Epistles General of St. Peter.

THE first Epistle was written by St. Peter, one of the twelve Apostles, to the Christians dispersed up and down in several countries of the Lesser Asia^f; for which cause, this Epistle also, and the next, are called *general*, like that of St. James. The Christian *strangers* herein mentioned, no doubt, were most of them converted Jews; for there were many scattered or dispersed Jews in several countries; but that there were converted Gentiles or *proselytes* among them, as in the other churches at Rome, Corinth, &c. seems probable, from their being *in times past not a people*^g, and from their having *wrought the will of the Gentiles* formerly, by *lasciviousness and abominable idolatries*^h: for of all sins, the whole body of the Jews were careful to avoid idolatryⁱ, ever since their return from the Babylonish captivity.

The Apostle, in the first place, endeavours to prevent their apostacy from the Christian religion; which they were in danger of, by reason of their persecutions, and *fiery trials*: he therefore confirms them in the faith, which will one day give them *an inheritance incorruptible* in heaven; and comforts them under their present sufferings and persecutions, which were for *the trial of their faith*, and which ought to be a matter of rejoicing to them, because, tending to secure their *praise, and honour, and glory*, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; and the more to comfort and confirm them, he shews that the Christian doctrine is no new thing, but that

^f Chap. i. 1, 2. ^g Chap. ii. 10. ^h Chap. iv. 3. ⁱ Dr. Wells thinks they were only Jews, because by them the Scripture understands the dispersed; and that idolatries may signify the covetousness of the Jews in getting money; as St. Paul says, covetousness is idolatry.

the prophets foretold this *salvation* by Christ, his *sufferings* and *glory*; and that they lose no privilege by believing in Christ, but rather obtain greater; which he expresses in the Jewish phrases^a, of being *a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*. These, he says, were now the Christian privileges, however the unbelieving Jews claimed them for themselves.

The Apostle also directs them in an holy conversation; that to this purpose they carefully abstain from all sin and lusts, that might be a scandal among the Heathen; and discharge the several duties which Christianity requires; such as love and kindness, constancy in prayer, charity, and hospitality, humility, trust in God, and watchfulness against their adversary the Devil's temptations; and also in respect to their particular relations, whether as subjects, servants, husbands, wives, bishops and presbyters of the church called elders, and those committed to their charge; that all be careful to behave themselves as the Christian doctrine requires. The particular reason of the exhortation to submission to *governors, &c.* at that time^a, might be to preserve them from being concerned in the Jewish wars, or bearing any part in that rebellion against Cæsar, or the Roman emperor and his officers, which was then breaking out among the Jews.

That difficult passage^b, *by which (Spirit) also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, &c.* is thus explained; viz. that Christ by his Spirit preached to those before the flood, by the ministry of Noah; they may be said to be *in prison*, either because in bondage or captivity under sin^c, or be-

^a Chap. ii. 9. like that of Exod. xix. 6.

^a Chap. ii. 13.

^b Chap. iii. 19, 20.

^c As Isa. xlii. 6, 7. and xlix. 9. Acts viii. 23. in the bond of iniquity.

cause, for their disobedience to the Spirit of Christ, waiting and preaching to them by Noah, they were all drowned, and their spirits are *reserved*, (as it were in prison,) expecting *the judgment* of the great day^d.

The Apostle mentions one particular motive to perseverance in the Christian religion, and a pious conversation^c, *the end of all things is at hand*; that is, the Jewish state was then near to its end, and their destruction approaching, according to our Saviour's phrase concerning the same destruction of the Jews^f, that *the end was not yet* in his time; but it being near at hand when St. Peter wrote this Epistle, they being for the most part converted Jews, should make a proper use of it, by piety and prayer, to secure themselves from being then overwhelmed.

As to the Second Epistle General of St. Peter, it was written a little before St. Peter's martyrdom. * Herein he confirms the Christians, as in the former Epistle, and exhorts them to continue stedfast in the Christian faith, and to evidence the truth of their perseverance therein, not only by a naked faith, but an holy conversation; not *turning from the holy commandment*. He assures them he was a witness to Christ's glory in the mount, and heard the voice declaring him to be the Son of God. The Apostle also warns them^b against heretics and false teachers, who were as vicious in their lives, as deceiving in their doctrine, giving themselves liberty in all manner of vice and uncleanness, *despising government*, and by their *cunningly devised fables*, endeavouring to poison others with their damnable heresies and impieties; like Balaam, who taught Balak how to ensnare the Israelites in the commission of fornication and idolatry. As for those who derided the Christian's hope, because things for the present con-

^d 2 Pet. ii. 5, 9. * Chap. iv. 7. ^f Matt. xxiv. 6. * Chap. i. 14. ^b Chap. ii.

tinued as they were, the Apostle shews^e, that Christ's patience was out of kindness to reform them: but as the old world was surprised in their sins, and destroyed by a flood of water; so as certainly Christ would come to judgment, when the world should be destroyed by fire, and the ungodly perish; therefore he exhorts to holiness and stedfastness in the faith.

There are two passages in this Epistle, which have been differently interpreted; the first^b, of God's *casting the angels which sinned* (that is, the devils) *down to hell, &c.* Not that they were to be in hell torments before the day of judgment, for they are represented in Scripture to have their mansions in the air, and about the earth; where they tempt and seduce, and do all the mischief they can to mankind: hence their chief, Satan, is styled *the prince of the air*ⁱ; and the devils cried out to Christ^k, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* So that the *casting them down to hell*, as also in Jude^l, *reserving them in everlasting chains*, seems to import only, as the original will bear, and according to the ancients, that God had adjudged them to hellish torments; and so delivered them to be reserved in the air for chains of darkness at the day of judgment: like as ver. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment*, to be punished; and,^m *To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever*; as a condemned criminal is reserved in a dungeon till his executionⁿ.

As for the other passage^o, of the world's being *reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, to be burnt up*; some understand the Apostle speaking here not of the end of the world, but of the coming

^e Chap. iii. ^b Chap. ii. 4. ⁱ Eph. ii. 2. ^k Matt. viii. 29. ^l Ver. 6. ^m Ver. 17. ⁿ *Tαρταρος*; signifies any place below, or where there is trouble, which the region of the air is, in respect to heaven. Grotius and Dr. Wells in loc. Mede, book i. disc. 4. ^o Chap. iii. 7—13.

of Christ to judgment on the Jews, which was then just approaching; and that in figurative expressions, which the Jews understood in the language of the prophet Joel¹, by the representation of blood and fire, and the dissolution of the heaven and the earth; thereby denoting an utter destruction, of which this Apostle gave a short hint in the first Epistle², *the end of all things is at hand*; that is, the Jewish temple, their city and state, will shortly be at an end, as it came to pass. But since the Apostle³ speaks of the destruction of the old world by water, in a literal sense; in like manner he seems to speak of the destruction of the heavens, or elements, and the earth, by fire, in a literal sense too.

Observations on the Two Epistles of St. Peter.

1st, **THAT** a good Christian may not only be patient, but joyful under sufferings and troubles; which make him so like Christ here, and entitle him to the possession of eternal joy with him hereafter⁴.

2dly, That it is the will of God, that all Christians make conscience of obedience and subjection to the supreme powers, (under whom they live,) and to the magistrates appointed by them; as the first Christians were enjoined to be *subject to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them who are sent by him*; that is, to the emperors, and their deputies the proconsuls, &c.⁵ and were taught, not to be of that rebellious, turbulent, and seditious temper, as the Jews were, (under pretence of being a free people, and subject only to God,) *using their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness*. This doctrine of the Apostle is the same with that of his Master; for Christ taught his disciples, that his *kingdom was*

¹ Chap. ii. 30. ² Chap. iv. 7. ³ Chap. iii. 6. ⁴ 1 Pet. i. 6—10. ⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c.

not of this world; but that he left their temporal or civil matters in the same state he found them, commanding, to *render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's*, to be obedient unto their civil governors.

3dly, That when God delays the punishing of sin at present, it is in order to the sinner's conversion; and if that be not the effect, the judgment will prove the more severe^u.

Design of the Three Epistles General of St. John.

THIS John was one of the twelve Apostles, and the author of the Gospel of St. John^x. His first Epistle was designed to instruct, comfort, and encourage the primitive Christians, and more particularly the Jewish converts; that their *joy might be full*, in relying on the Son of God; for he is *faithful and just*, to make good his word and promise to forgive us, forasmuch as he is *the propitiation for our sins*, if we believe in him, and for the future *keep his commandments*.

The Christians of that age were in danger of being seduced by some deceivers, the spawn of Simon Magus: he himself, and some of his party, *denied that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah*, or Christ^x. Some of the heretics denied the human nature^a of Christ, or *that Christ was come in the flesh*^b. They pretended that Christ did seem to be a man, and to die; but was not so in reality, but in appearance only^c. Another sort of heretical de-

^u 2 Pet. iii. 8, 9, 10. ^x Dr. Mill's Prolegom. p. 17. ^y Iren. l. i. c. 20. Docuit semetipsum esse, qui inter Judæos quidem quasi filius apparebat. ^z Chap. ii. 22. ^a Cerinthus, Marcion, &c. de his Ignatius ad Smyrn. §. 1, 2, 3. et ad Trall. §. 9, 10. Iren. l. i. c. 25. Tertul. de Carne Christi, §. 1. ^b Chap. iv. 2, 3. ^c Iren. l. i. c. 20. Homo appareret esse, cum non

ceivers were contrary to the former, who denied the divine nature of Christ, pretending that he was only bare man^d, not the Son of God, and *believed not the record that God gave of his Son, who is the true God^e, and eternal life*, (or the Author of eternal life, as he is here described to be^f.) Against such St. John wrote some part of his Gospel; and now in this Epistle assures the true Christians, that he was one of those who had *heard and seen* the Lord Jesus, *the Word of life*, (by whom is revealed to us the Gospel of life and salvation,) and conversed with him, being a witness both of his real manhood, and of the miraculous power whereby he was evidenced to be *the Son of God, and the true God*; and that the deceivers before mentioned, and all their followers, were antichrists, (opposers of Christ.) St. John earnestly warns the Christians to beware of all such; and tells them, that the unction, or anointing which they had received, *i. e.* the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them, was sufficient to convince them of, and teach them, the truth.

Again, Some of these deceivers, the followers of Simon Magus, pretended, that a bare faith would save without holiness^g, and allowed themselves in many foul sins; therefore the Apostle cautions the church against them; for every one who rightly hopes in Christ, *purifieth himself*; and *whosoever is born of God*, or formed into a new nature, and endued with his Spirit, *doth not commit sin*, that is, doth not go on in any way of sin; *for his seed*, the

esset Homo: which Simon applies to himself, as being the Son, and Christ. ^d Ebion, &c. Iren. l. i. c. 26. and not. Grabii.

^e See Glassius Philol. Sacr. l. iii. tract. 2. de Pron. Relat. Can. 10. and Dr. Whitby in loc. ^f Chap. v. 5, 10, 11, 12, 20.

^g Simoniani et Valentiniani. Iren. l. i. c. 20. ut liberos agere quæ velint: secundum enim ipsius gratiam salvari homines, non secundum operas justas: et Iren. l. i. c. 1. §. 12. et Grabii not. ibidem.

Holy Spirit, *remaineth in him* ; and, in a manner, *he cannot commit sin, because he is born of God*^s, being become a *new creature*, and thereby having, as it were, a new nature ; his mind, and temper, and inclinations being quite changed from what they were ; so that to commit wilful sin is now contrary to the genius and temper of his soul, to his inclination and disposition, (as we say of a generous man, that he cannot do a base action ;) and it is become the bent of his very nature to please God, and to be careful not to offend him by sin : but *he that committeth sin*, that lives in the practice of any wilful sin, *is of the devil*^h. So that all true Christians are to be careful that *no man deceive* them in this matter, but that they abandon and avoid all evil courses ; and also shew their love to the Lord Jesus, (who so much loved us,) by keeping his commandments ; especially maintaining true cordial *love one towards another*, which is the peculiar duty of a Christianⁱ, on the performance of which St. John much insists ; forasmuch as, except those instances of piety which directly have respect to God, or belong only to ourselves, the rest are in a manner included in love to our neighbour ; which so influences our behaviour, that it be consistent with justice, charity, and all the duties we are to perform to parents, superiors, equals, and inferiors.

Lastly, He concludes as he began, with confirming them in the faith of the Son of God, who hath the gift of eternal life, and will hear and grant their supplications.

In this Epistle, St. John gives an illustrious proof of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity : ^k *There are three that bear record* (or witness) *in heaven ; the Father, the Word, (or Son,) and the Holy*

^s 1 John iii. 3, 9. ^h Ver. 8. ⁱ Chap. iv. 7, 8, 9. ^k Chap. v. 7.

Ghost ; and these three are one. Which words are omitted in some ancient copies, probably because in the original the same words, which we translate *there are three that bear record*, or witness, ver. 7, are repeated ver. 8. Some careless transcriber (possibly in the earlier ages of Christianity, after whom others copied) having written, *There are three that bear record*, ver. 7, happened to leave out the remaining part of the 7th verse, and so far of the beginning of the 8th verse, till he came to look upon the same words in the 8th verse, *There are three that bear record*, or witness, (for it is the same word in the original Greek, which is translated *record* in the 7th verse, and *witness* in the 8th verse.) The two verses are thus: Ver. 7. *For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.* Ver. 8. *And there are three that bear record]* in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. Where we see, how easily the transcriber (whose livelihood was gotten by transcribing books, before the invention of printing, and therefore who may well be presumed to write fast) might omit all those words of the 7th verse, and part of the 8th verse, which are between the crotchets, by looking on the same words of the 8th verse, which he had just before written down out of the 7th verse, viz. *There are three that bear record*, and so go on to, *in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood*, ver. 8. instead of, *in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*, ver. 7. and I the rather mention this conjecture of Dr. Mill, because I observed the like mistake and omission of the transcriber of some of these papers, on the like occasion of some words being repeated near together¹.

¹ For a farther proof of such a mistake of transcribers, see Casaubon Exercitat. 15. Ann. 33. num. 37. p. 392.

But however this was, it is certain that these words of the 7th verse are quoted in substance by Tertullian^m, (in whose time the very authentic Epistles of the apostles were extantⁿ;) and also twice by Cyprian^o, who are of much greater antiquity than the copies wherein they are omitted, and who lived before Arius, and therefore it cannot be pretended they framed them to serve the Trinitarian cause: but on the other hand it appears from them, that in their time (about the close of the second century, and the beginning of the third) those words were found in St. John's Epistle. And indeed without them the argument of St. John seems very imperfect; for as, ver. 9. *the witness of men* refers to the *witness in earth*, mentioned verse 8. so the *witness of God* refers to the *record or witness in heaven*, mentioned verse 7.^p

What the *sin unto death* is^q, the remission of which the Apostle doth not say that the first Christians should pray for, he hath not particularly mentioned. In the ancient church, a deliberate commission of the heinous sins of idolatry, murder, and adultery, debarred the sinners from the communion of the church: perhaps the Apostle intended the obstinate and incorrigible^r offenders in such kinds, who, after admonition, still persisted, and refused to submit to the discipline of the church; there being no hopes of cure of that sick soul, who refuses to submit to a proper physician appointed by God: so we call a disease particularly mortal, or *unto death*, when there is no hopes of recovery. Others believe^s the *sin unto death* to be a total apostasy from the Christian faith, joined with a malicious blaspheming

^m Advers. Praxeam, c. 25. ⁿ Præscript. c. 36. ^o De Unitate Ecclesiæ et Epist. ad Jubaianam. Vide Dr. Mill ad finem Epist. i. Joh. p. 742. ^p Compare Dr. Wells in loc. with Dr. Mill ibid. ^q Chap. v. 16. ^r Grotius in loc. ^s Beza in loc.

of the Spirit of God, (as the *sin against the Holy Ghost*¹, which Christ says, *shall not be forgiven* :) for too many of the Jews, at that time, relapsed to Judaism, renouncing Christ, and blaspheming the Holy Spirit, which so miraculously testified of him; whom St. Paul says, *it is impossible to renew again to repentance*^u. So that those are guilty of the sin unto death, who are either obstinate apostates, or continue hardened, incorrigible sinners in other respects.

In the Second Epistle of St. John, he styles himself *the elder*, partly because he was then^v above ninety years of age, and also because he presided over all the churches of the Lesser Asia. This Epistle was written to a Lady of quality, and to her family, who had embraced the Christian faith, and whose *sister*, with her *children*, were known to the apostle^x, much to the same purpose as the former, to testify and confirm them in the true faith, and in the true practice of charity and Christian love, and warning them to beware of the deceivers mentioned in the other Epistle, who *denied that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh*.

The Third Epistle of St. John was written to one Gaius, a Christian, who was a kind friend and courteous entertainer of the distressed *brethren*, or Christians that were strangers, especially those who *went forth* to publish the Gospel among the Gentiles, and would *take nothing of them*^y, and therefore were recommended by the Apostle to wealthy and charitable Christians^z. The Apostle encourages him in the true faith, and to continue that hospitality and charity: and as for Diotrephes, who *loved to have the pre-eminence* himself, and would not submit to the Apostle, nor receive or entertain the

¹ In Matt. xii. 31.

^u Heb. vi. 4, &c.

^v Dr. Mill's Pro-

legom. p. 18.

^x Ver. 13.

^y Ver. 7.

^z Ver. 6.

brethren recommended to him, nor yet suffer others to do it; the Apostle threatens to deal with him accordingly, or *remember his deeds*, (not so much for the opposition he made to his person, as to the progress of the Gospel.) But as for Gaius, he had more to say to him, but that he hoped shortly to see him.

Observations on the Epistles of St. John.

1st, **THAT** it was a signal instance of God's providence and care for the church, to preserve St. John the Apostle alive so long, *viz.* till the emperor Trajan's time^a, above threescore years after Christ's ascension into heaven. So that he who was one of those who saw the Lord Jesus, and was a witness to all that was done, might give an early check to those deceivers above mentioned, and also might satisfy and confirm the first Christians.^b

2dly, That those sectaries, who deny the necessity of the ministerial teaching, on pretence that *the anointing* (or the gifts of the Holy Ghost) is sufficient to teach them, because the Apostle told the primitive Christians, *the anointing which ye have received abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you*^c, is a gross error; for that unction was miraculous, and as such is now ceased; unless they can shew such immediate extraordinary effects of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in knowledge and speaking languages, and healing diseases, &c. as God vouchsafed to those primitive Christians.

3dly, That unfeigned love, friendship, and kindness one towards another, is the peculiar badge of the Christian religion^d.

4thly, This Apostle instructs us, how we may ex-

^a Martyrolog. Rom. Dec. 27. Euseb. Hist. lib. iii. c. 23.

^b 1 John i. 1, 2, 3. ^c 1 John ii. 27. ^d 1 John ii. 9, 10, 11. and iv. 11. to the end. 2 John 5. 3 John 5, 6.

amine ourselves beforehand, and judge what our sentence is like to be at the last day, (which certainly is a matter of great importance^e;) *If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God;* that is, if our heart, or conscience, condemn us, (either of wilful omission of duty, or persisting in sin without true repentance and reformation,) then God will condemn us too; for he knows more of us than our consciences know, and if we cannot but condemn ourselves, that is a sign that God will condemn us also; seeing we know by the Scripture rule what are the terms of our acceptance with him, what we ought not to do, and what we ought to have done: but if our conscience condemn us not, but that we have abstained from such and such sins, and performed such duties, or have timely and truly repented and reformed, and become new creatures, *then have we confidence towards God;* great hopes in God's mercy, that he will not condemn us, but accept our sincere endeavours, hear our prayers, and save our souls.

Design of the General Epistle of St. Jude.

THIS Jude was one of the twelve Apostles, called Lebbæus and Thaddæus^f, and was brother to James, who wrote the Epistle of St. James, and so, as is supposed, one of Joseph's sons by a former^g wife, or else nearly related to the Virgin Mary. This St. Jude wrote this Epistle to some of the first Christians, especially to the Jews who were converted to

^e 1 John iii. 20, 21.
of St. James.

^f Matt. x. 3.

^g See what is said

the Christian faith, and dispersed up and down in several countries; therefore it is also called a catholic or general Epistle, (as were those of his brother James and St. Peter.) The design was to encourage them to persevere in their holy faith, and to caution them against the deceivers and heretics, who had crept in amongst them, on purpose to destroy the true faith, and were persons of corrupt and lewd conversations. The Apostle (much in the same manner as St. Peter had done in his second Epistle) briefly describes their wretched doctrines and practices, and declares the terrible judgments that would overtake them, *who were before of old ordained to this condemnation*^k; that is, not made and ordained by God on purpose to be punished; but, as the originalⁱ strictly imports, of whom it was before written or prophesied, that this should be their condemnation without repentance, as *Enoch prophesied* of them^k.

The history of Michael, and the prophecy of Enoch^l, being owned by the Jews, though not in Scripture, the Apostle argues with them from their own authors and concessions.

Observations on the Epistle of St. Jude.

1st, **THAT** great care is to be taken to avoid deceivers; who many times (whatever they pretend) are very ill persons, and study their own advantage^m.

2dly, That it is a character of the worst of heretics, to *despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities*ⁿ.

^k Ver. 4.

ⁱ Πρωτογεννητος.

^k Ver. 14.

^l Ver. 9, 14.

^m Ver. 4, 11, 12, 16.

ⁿ Verse 8.

Design of the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

THIS St. John was one of the twelve apostles, and the same that wrote the Gospel, and the three Epistles of St. John. He was called *the Divine*, (as is justly conceived,) by reason of his writings, especially the Gospel, which sets forth the divine nature of Christ, or, as he is God; whereas the other Gospels begin the account of him, as he was man, and born in the world. This book was written by him in the isle of Patmos, whither he was banished^p.

The first three chapters contain the messages which God, in a vision, commanded St. John to send to the seven churches of Asia, represented by *golden candlesticks*, and to the particular bishops of each church, represented by *stars*, and called *angels*, probably in allusion to the Jewish church, the priests whereof were styled *angels*, or *messengers*^q, as bringing the commands of God to the people, and carrying, or offering their prayers to God; or else, from the ruler of the synagogue, whose office was to order the prayers and reading in the synagogue, and was called *angel*, or *bishop*^r.

These seven churches were at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; all which were eminent cities in the Lesser Asia. The design of these messages was, to acquaint them with the notice God took of the behaviour of every one of them, to encourage them in what was good, and reprove them for what was amiss; to caution them against false teachers and seducers, and to comfort them in their sufferings,

^p Just. Martyr et Irenæus apud Dr. Mill, Prolegom. p. 19.

^q Chap. i. 9. ^r Mal. ii. 7. ^s Lightfoot Hor. in Matt. iv. 23. The Sheliach Zibbor. Compare Prideaux, Connect. part i. book vi. sub an. 445. concerning the ministration of the synagogue service, num. 4.

lest they should, through fear, cast off their holy profession ; assuring them that God would not fail to reward and crown all those that persevered in his holy faith and service with eternal glory.

^b God is said to *hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes*, who allowed themselves to commit adultery or fornication, on pretence of encouragement from Nicolaus the deacon ; who being suspected of jealousy, to manifest the contrary, is said to give allowance to his wife (not to be an adulteress, but) to marry whom she would^c, although he himself was free from any lewd practices.

The other part of the Revelation contains several prophecies concerning the state and condition of the Christian church from the beginning, and the rage of the devil and his instruments against it ; concerning the sufferings and martyrdom of many ; the ruin and destruction of all their enemies ; and at last, the glorious triumphs and joys of all the holy members of Christ's church. For a more particular account of this book, the reader may consult Dr. Wells's Paraphrase thereon.

Observations on the Revelations.

1st, **THAT** God curiously observes, and takes notice how all the members of his church behave themselves, whether well or ill ; and as he will be sure to punish the bad according to their works, so he will not fail to reward all that persevere in his service^d.

2dly, We have an instance of episcopal government, in the messages sent from Christ by St. John to the angels or bishops of the churches of Asia^e. Which the more carefully and impartially any one

^b In chap. ii. 6. ^c Euseb. Hist. l. iii. c. 29. Gr. c. 23. *γαμου, τῇ βουλομένῳ*, Vide et Grot. in loc. ^d Chap. ii. iii. ^e Chap. i. ii.

reads, the more he will be convinced of the primitive government of the church by bishops. St. John directs his speech to *one* as superior to the rest, and makes him accountable for the faults of the whole flock; which most likely he would not have done, if other presbyters had been equally appointed over them. To this purpose it is farther to be considered, that the most early accounts of the primitive church assure us^f, that bishops were settled in all those churches, at or near the time when the epistles in the Revelations were sent to them; particularly Onesimus at Ephesus^g, Melito at Sardis^h, and Polycarp at Smyrnaⁱ. Now St. John lived, as hath been observed, above threescore years after Christ's ascension; by which time the church was in a more settled state, as to its government, than it was before. It hath been objected; that the Apostle mentions more than one single person, *some of you*^k. But the answer is easy, that although that epistle is directed to the angel or bishop of Smyrna, yet it appears, that the particulars therein contained related not only to his single person, but to all the members of the church over which he presided; and that is the reason of the expression in the plural number: and the like is to be understood in reference to the other epistles.

And as for the universal Christian church next to the apostolical age, the most ancient accounts thereof give full evidence of this government, and more clearly explain, illustrate, and confirm what is mentioned concerning the same in the holy Scriptures: which the reader may be thoroughly satisfied in, by consulting the authors cited in the margin¹; and at

^f Bp. Potter's Government of the Ancient Church, ch. iv.

^g Ignatius Epist. ad Ephes.

^h Euseb. Hist. lib. iv. c. 26.

ⁱ Ignatius Epist. ad Polycarp. et Iren. lib. iii. c. 3.

^k Chap.

ii. 10. and in other places.

¹ Bp. Potter, ib. Bp. Beveridge's Codex Can. Eccles. Prim. l. ii. c. 11.

the same time may remember, that every law or institution is best explained by the immediate subsequent practice thereupon; and that the primitive Christians had the best opportunity of knowing the minds of the apostles: nor is it credible, at so great a distance of the Christian churches, from east to west, that this constitution should be so early and universally received and submitted to, if it had not been established by the apostles, or the first founders of those churches: nor, lastly, can it be conceived that any of those, who were always ready to suffer death in defence of the doctrine and ordinances of Christ, would permit any change to be made in his institutions, in so important an affair as the government of the church. It is no proper reply to this argument, that we do not submit to the judgment of the ancient fathers in all points of doctrine, nor, to all their practices; in which however they might be mistaken, yet their testimony in plain matters of fact is not to be the less regarded.

3dly, All the seven once famous cities^m are in the hands of the Turks, by whom the Christian churches there are almost utterly ruinedⁿ; and the few Christians who live there are reduced to the most deplorable servitude, there being very few Christian families in Pergamus, and but one church, to which a priest is sent from Smyrna to officiate: not so much as one church in Thyatira, nor in Sardis: in Philadelphia there are four, and a considerable number of Christians, but oppressed and enslaved by the Turks: Laodicea is not at all inhabited: Ephesus is only a poor village, and in it are the ruins of their ancient magnificent churches: Smyrna hath two churches belonging to the Grecian Christians, and one to the Armenians, and a larger number of

^m Mentioned chap. ii. 3.
Ecclesiastiarum Notitia.

ⁿ Dr. Smith Septem Asia Ec-

Christians live there than in the rest, but under the heavy yoke of barbarous Turks. Oh! how should we walk worthy of our Christian privileges, lest the case be ours also; ° *I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place.*

4thly, That nothing can befall the church but what God foresees and knows, and is pleased to permit; as is evident from this revelation beforehand to St. John, of what should afterwards come to pass.

Lastly, Although the meaning of many of the prophecies contained in this book may not be clearly understood now, yet hereafter the Christians may know them, and, especially by the event, adore the wisdom and providence of God. In the mean time, we may receive great edification from several parts of it: such as those noble hymns offered up to God and Christ: the precepts for adoration of one supreme God, in opposition to the worshipping of idols, or any creature¹: the comfort of relying on Christ's merits²: lastly, the encouragement to a patient continuance in the faith, and a holy life, notwithstanding any present sufferings³.

As Mr. Collyer's account of the Book of Revelation is but a short one, the following Analysis, taken chiefly from Mr. Daubuz's Commentary upon the Revelation, and from Dr. Newton's learned Dissertations on the Prophecies, it is hoped, will not be unacceptable to the Christian and curious reader, who wishes to be acquainted with this mysterious book.

IN chapter i. we have the title of the book; *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*; the scope and design

° Chap. ii. 5. ° Chap. iv. 8, 11. v. 9, 10, 13, 15. ° Chap. ix. 20. and xiv. 7. and xxi. 8. ° Chap. v. 9. and vii. 14. and xii. 11. ° Chap. ii. 3, 10, 26. and xiv. 12, 13. and xvi. 15.

of it, and the blessing on him that readeth, and on them that attend to it : the dedication to the seven churches of Asia, and a solemn preface to shew the great authority of the divine revealer. Then the place the Apostle was in when the vision was revealed to him, Patmos, a desolate island in the Archipelago, whither St. John was banished in the reign of Nero, more probably than in that of Domitian. The revelation was given on the Lord's day. The manner and circumstances of the first vision. See 12th and following verses.

Chap. ii. iii. contain the seven epistles to the seven churches of Asia. These seven are particularly addressed, because they were under St. John's immediate inspection. These epistles are not prophetical, but peculiar to the church of that age ; however, the contents of them are of use and instruction to the church in all ages. The structure and form of these epistles is excellent. They are so far prophetical, as they contain certain predictions with regard to the churches, which were accomplished. The present state of these churches shew the truth of what St. John wrote to them, and should warn Christians of the judgments of God.

Chap. iv. The preparatory vision to things which must be hereafter. The scenery drawn in allusion to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and to the tabernacle or temple.

Chap. v. A continuation of the preparatory vision, in order to shew the great importance of the prophecies here delivered. Future events are supposed to be written in a book. This book is sealed with seven seals, signifying so many periods of prophecy. The Son of God, called *The Lion of the tribe of Judah*, alone qualified to open the seals ; whereupon all creatures sing praises to God and to Christ.

Chap. vi. contains the opening of the seals. The first seal or period memorable for conquest. It com-

menches with Vespasian, includes the conquest of Judea, and continues during the reign of the Flavian family, and the short reign of Nerva, about twenty-eight years. The second seal or period is noted for war and slaughter, denoted by the red horse. It commences with Trajan, and comprehends the horrid wars and slaughters of the Jews and Romans in the reigns of Trajan and Adrian. It continues during the reigns of Trajan and his successors by blood or adoption, about ninety-five years. The third seal or period under the emblem of a black horse, and his rider *with a pair of balances in his hand*, points out the strict execution of justice, and the procuration of corn and oil and wine. This period commences with Septimus Severus. He and Alexander Severus were just and severe emperors, and no less celebrated for procuring corn and oil to the Romans, in the time of a scarcity. This period continues during the reigns of the Septimian family, about forty-two years. The fourth seal or period under the emblem of a pale horse, and his rider's name Death, and hell following, shews that period to be distinguished by a concurrence of evils, war, and famine, and pestilence, and wild beasts. This period commences with Maximin, and continues to Diocletian; a period remarkable for the devastation of war, of famines, of pestilences and wild beasts, the length of it about fifty years. The fifth seal or period, upon the opening of which John *saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God*, is remarkable for a dreadful persecution of the Christians, called the tenth and last general persecution, and which was begun by Diocletian. From hence a memorable era, called the era of Diocletian, or the era of martyrs. The sixth seal or period is remarkable for great changes and revolutions, expressed by great commotions in the earth, and in the heavens. But no change upon earth could be greater, than the

subversion of the Heathen, and the establishment of the Christian religion. The like figures of speech are used by the prophets; (see Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Haggai;) but the same thing is expressed afterwards in plainer terms.

Chap. vii. A continuation of the sixth seal or period, in which is given a description of the peace of the church in Constantine's time, and of the great accession of converts to it; not only of Jews, but of all nations. This period is from the reign of Constantine the Great to the death of Theodosius the Great, about seventy years.

Chap. viii. The seventh seal or period comprehends seven periods, distinguished by the sounding of seven trumpets, and before the sounding them there is silence in heaven for half an hour. This silence of half an hour alludes to a ceremony among the Jews; while the priest went into the temple to burn incense, all were silent, and the people without prayed to themselves. This shews that the peace of the church would continue but a short time. As the seals foretold the state of the Roman empire before and till it became Christian, so the trumpets foreshadow the fate of it afterwards. The design of the trumpets is to rouse the nations against the Roman empire. At the sounding of the first trumpet, Alaric and his Goths invade the Roman empire, twice besiege Rome, and set fire to it in several places. At the sounding of the second trumpet, Attila and his Huns waste the Roman provinces, and compel the eastern emperor, Theodosius the Second, and the western emperor, Valentinian the Third, to submit to shameful terms. At the sounding of the third trumpet, Genseric and his Vandals arrive from Africa, spoil and plunder Rome, and set sail again with immense wealth and innumerable captives. At the sounding of the fourth trumpet, Odoacer and the Heruli put an end to the very name of the western

empire. Theodoric founds the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy; and what remains of it to the Romans is annexed to the eastern empire, and Rome governed by a duke under the exarch of Ravenna. The three following trumpets are named *woe* trumpets, and they relate chiefly to the downfall of the western.

Chap. ix. contains a prophecy of the locusts, or the Arabians under their false prophet Mahomet. At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, a star fallen from heaven opens the bottomless pit, and the sun and air are darkened. Mahomet is fitly compared to a blazing star, and the Arabians to locusts: and the sun and air were really darkened at that time by an eclipse. The locusts are commanded not to hurt any green thing, or any tree, but to hurt only the corrupt and idolatrous Christians. They fulfilled this their commission. They were to torment the Greek and Latin churches, but not to extirpate them. The locusts were repulsed as often as they besieged Constantinople. They are described so as to shew that not real but figurative locusts were intended. They are likened unto horses, and the Arabians were famous in all ages for their horses and horsemanship; and the description of them answers exactly to Mahomet's soldiers, and was fulfilled by them in every possible construction. We have also a prophecy of the Euphratean horsemen. At the sounding of the sixth trumpet the four angels or sultanies of the Turks and Othmans are loosed from the river Euphrates, who were prepared for three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days to slay the third part of men. The Turks had numerous armies, especially of cavalry; they delight in scarlet, blue, and yellow. The use of great guns and gunpowder was then among them. Their power to do hurt was in their tails, or the poisonous train of their religion. The remains of the Greek church among them are

in a miserable condition. Yet the Latin or western church is not at all reclaimed by the ruin of the Greek or eastern church, but still persist in their idolatry and wickedness.

Chap. x. contains a preparatory vision to the prophecies relating to the western church. St. John saw an angel with a little book, or codicil to the larger book of the Apocalypse, in his hand. This is properly disposed under the sixth trumpet, to describe the state of the western church after the description of that of the eastern. We cannot know what is meant by the seven thunders. Though the little book describes the calamities of the western church, yet it is declared that they shall all have a happy period under the seventh trumpet; therefore, St. John is desired to publish the contents of this little book as well as the larger book of the Apocalypse.

Chap. xi. contains the contents of the little book. The measuring of the temple, to shew that during all this period there were some true Christians, who conformed to the rule and measure of God's word. The church to be trodden under foot by Gentiles and corrupt Christians in worship and practice forty and two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty years. Some true witnesses however to protest against the corruptions of religion; and they are said to be two, because reformers have commonly appeared in pairs. They were to prophesy in sackcloth, as long as the corruption lasted. They have a most excellent character, and are invested with a most extensive power. They suffer, and are put to death; they rise again from the dead, and ascend into heaven. Some apply this prophecy of the death and resurrection of the witnesses to John Huss and Jerome of Prague, whose doctrine revived after their death, in their followers. Others to the Protestants of the league of Smalcald, who were

entirely routed by the emperor Charles V. in the battle of Mulburg; but upon the change of affairs, the emperor was obliged, by the treaty of Passau, to allow them the free exercise of their religion. Some again to the massacre of the Protestants in France, and to Henry III.'s afterwards granting them the free exercise of their religion. Others again to latter events: Peter Jurieu to the persecution of the Protestants by Louis XIV.; Bishop Lloyd and Mr. Whiston to the Duke of Savoy's persecution of the Protestants in the valleys of Piedmont, and his re-establishing them afterwards. In all these cases there may be some resemblance, but none of these is the last persecution, and therefore this prophecy remains yet to be fulfilled. Dr. Newton has given an historical deduction, to shew that there have been some true witnesses, who have professed doctrines contrary to those of the Church of Rome, and that from the seventh century down to the Reformation. Among the principal of whom were the Albigenses and Waldenses in the thirteenth century: the famous John Wickliff and the Lollards; John Huss and Jerome of Prague. Hence an answer to the Popish question, Where was your religion before Luther?

Chap. xii. contains an account of the church persecuted by the great red dragon. The church is represented by a mother bearing children to Christ. And the great red dragon is the heathen Roman empire. His jealousy of the church was from the beginning; but yet the church brought forth many children to Christ, and in time such as were promoted to the empire; particularly Constantine, who ruled all nations with a rod of iron. The woman flees into the wilderness, and the war in heaven represents the contest between the Heathen and the Christian religions. The Christian prevails, and

Constantine himself and the Christians of his time describe his conquests under the same image. Still new woes, but for a short time, threatened to the inhabitants of the earth. The red dragon deposed, still persecutes the church, and attempts, under Julian, to restore the Pagan and ruin the Christian religion. The woman flees into the wilderness, and inundations of barbarous nations are excited to overwhelm the Christian religion; but instead of doing this, the Heathen conquerors submit to the religion of the conquered Christians. But the great red dragon practised another method of persecuting the Christians, as may be seen in the following chapter.

Chap. xiii. contains a description of the ten horned beast, successor to the great red dragon. Both Papists and Protestants agree that the beast represents the Roman empire. But the ten horned beast is not Pagan, but Christian, not imperial, but papal Rome. He is successor to the great red dragon. But for a more particular account of the rise and progress of papal power and tyranny, agreeable to the prophecy of the beast with ten horns and ten crowns, see Mede, Daubuz, and Newton.

Chap. xiv. contains a state of the true church in opposition to that of the beast. We have the first principal effort towards a reformation in the public opposition of emperors and bishops to the worship of saints and images in the eighth and ninth centuries. Another effort by the Waldenses and Albigenses, who pronounced the Church of Rome to be the Apocalyptic Babylon, and denounced her destruction. The third effort by Martin Luther and his fellow reformers, who protested against all the corruptions of the Church of Rome, as destructive of salvation; and this is followed with a declaration from heaven to comfort them, *From henceforth the dead who die in the Lord are blessed.* The judgments of God upon

the followers and adherents of the beast are represented under the figures, first of harvest, and then of vintage. These judgments are not yet fulfilled.

Chap. xv. contains a preparatory vision to the pouring out of the seven vials. These seven plagues belong to the seventh and last trumpet, or the third and last woe trumpet, and consequently are not yet fulfilled. Seven angels are appointed to pour them out.

Chap. xvi. contains the commission to pour out the seven vials, which are so many steps to the ruin of the Roman church, as the trumpets were of the ruin of the Roman empire. As Rome resembles Egypt in her crimes, so does she in her punishments. To be convinced of this, compare the pouring out of the several vials with the plagues, which God inflicted upon Egypt by the hand of Moses.

Chap. xvii. shews, that as Rome resembles Egypt in her plagues, so shall her fall be like that of Babylon. St. John is called to see the condemnation and execution of the great whore, and this character is more proper to modern than ancient Rome. But as to the description here given of spiritual Babylon, the inscription upon her forehead, her being drunken with the blood of the saints, how the ten kingdoms gave their power and strength to the beast, her fall and destruction, the lamentations of some and the rejoicings of others, the triumph of the church for God's judgments upon her, the victory and triumph of Christ over the beast and the false prophet; would the inquisitive reader be fully informed of these particulars, let him consult the above-mentioned learned authors. The fall and destruction of the beast is begun, and will be completed, when the Christian religion is rightly known and practised, and when civil and religious liberty universally prevails.

Chap. xx. Satan is bound, and the famous millennium commences, or the resurrection of the saints, and their reign upon earth for a thousand years.

The millennium is not yet fulfilled, even though the resurrection be taken figuratively: but the resurrection must be understood in a literal sense. And other prophets, as well as St. John, have foretold, that there shall be such a happy period as the millennium; but he only, that the martyrs shall rise to partake of it, and that it shall continue a thousand years. The Jewish and Christian church have both believed, that these thousand years would be the seventh millenary of the world. To prove this, many quotations from Jewish writers, and from the primitive fathers of the Christian church, might be adduced. The millennium was believed in the early times of Christianity, but grew into disrepute, because some, both Jewish and Christian writers, have debased it with a mixture of fables, because it is a doctrine opposite to the errors and tyranny of Rome, and because it has been by some abused to bad purposes, being made an engine of faction; and turbulent fanatics, under the pretence of saints, have aspired to dominion, and disturbed the peace of civil society. The doctrine of the millennium has now in a good measure obtained with pious and learned men, that credit it once had in the Christian church. Great caution is however required in treating of this doctrine. It must not be pruned and lopped too short on one side, nor on the other allowed to grow too wild and luxuriant. After the millennium, Satan will be loosed again for a little time, to deceive the nations Gog and Magog. All that learned men have said concerning Gog and Magog is only conjecture. These are mystic names, and the last enemies of the Christian church, but who they shall be cannot be said with any degree of certainty. Next will follow the final overthrow of Satan, the general resurrection, and end of the world.

Chap. xxi. *A new heaven and a new earth succeeded in the room of the first heaven and the first*

earth, which *had passed away* at the general judgment. A prophecy of the new earth is, that *there is no more sea*. There is also a new Jerusalem, which shall be the habitation of the saints of the first resurrection, and it shall also be the habitation of the saints of the general resurrection. The new heaven and the new earth are not to take place till after the millennium; and the new Jerusalem is described in an assemblage of the sublimest, richest imagery of Ezekiel and other ancient prophets. See the description, Rev. xxi. 11, &c.

Chap. xxii. The first five verses of this chapter are a continuation of the description of the new Jerusalem. In the conclusion, the angel ratifies and confirms all these particulars by a repetition of the same solemn assurance which he had before given, that *these sayings are faithful and true*, that he was commissioned by the same God, who had inspired the ancient prophets; and a blessing too is pronounced upon those who *keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book*. St. John testifieth himself to be the person who *saw and heard these things*; and he who revealed them, not only attesteth them to be true, but will also come speedily to accomplish them; to which St. John answers, and in him the whole church, *Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus*. He closeth all with the usual apostolical benediction, wishing *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* to the churches of Asia in particular, and to all Christians in general.

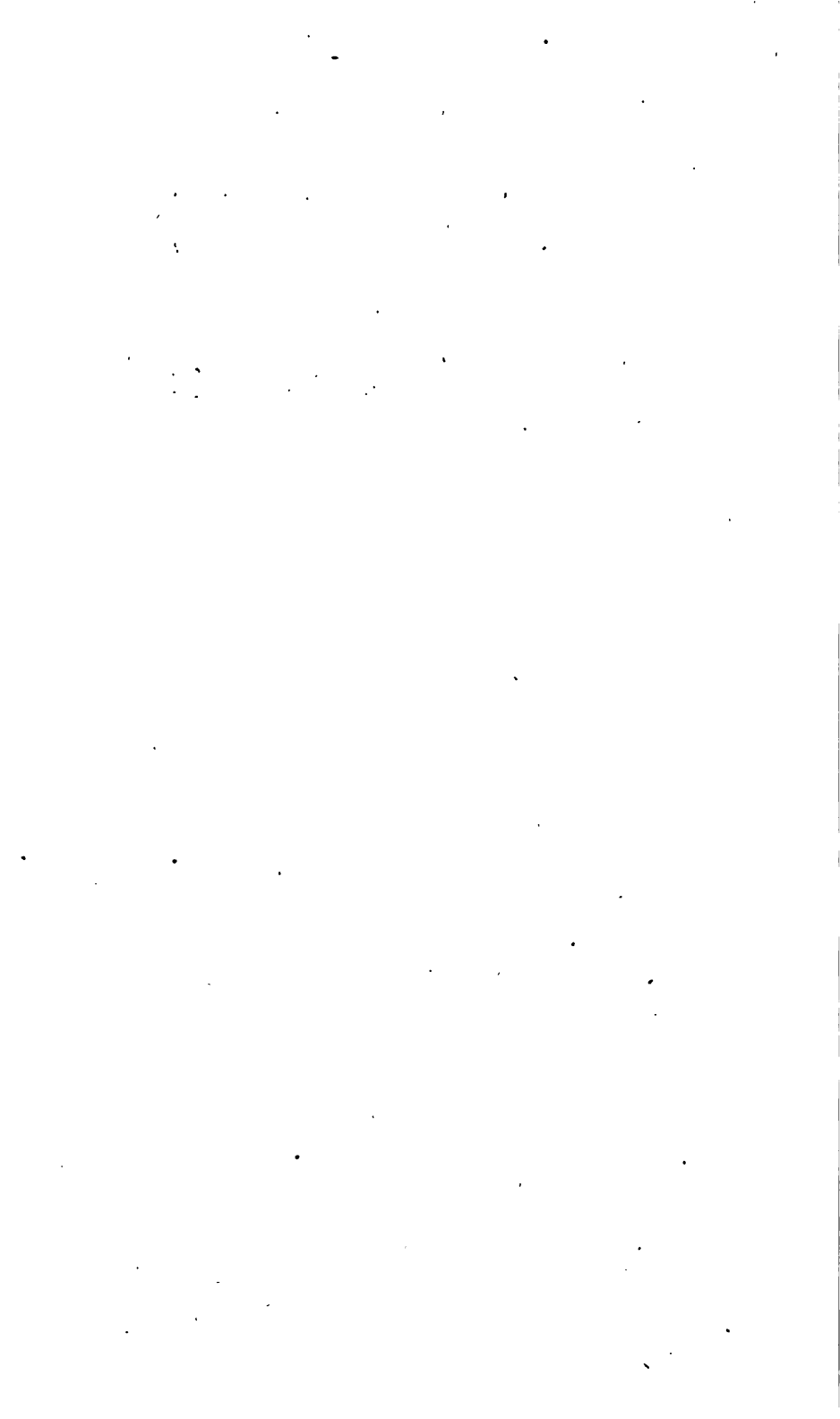
The conclusion (to use the words of Dr. Newton) is truly excellent, as well as all other parts of this book; and nothing could be contrived to leave these things with a stronger impression upon the mind of the reader. In the whole, from first to last, appears the piety of the divine revealer, *the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and end, the Author and Finisher* of every good work, and this more especially.

The Conclusion.

THUS we have gone through the particular books of the Old and New Testament, and observed the chief designs and intentions of them. And now to conclude: Let us consider seriously, and lay it to heart, that by hearing and reading what is contained in the holy Bible, *viz.* the glorious privileges which belong to pious persons, of being the children of God, and heirs of heaven; the exhortations and instructions for an holy life; the gracious promises to holiness, and the threatenings against sinful lusts and impiety; the consolations in trouble, and the Christian arguments of patience and such like: I say by hearing and reading these things that are set down in this holy book, the same which we now have, the ancient Christians became so holy and truly religious, so exemplary in their lives, so diligent in their duties, so devout and charitable, so free from sinful pollutions, so patient and joyful in sufferings, especially when it was for the cause of Christ and religion; that it must needs be a great aggravation of our unfruitfulness, and our condemnation must be the heavier, if the same holy Scriptures work not in us a care to live godly, to avoid sins, and cheerfully submit to the Divine will: for the more excellent the doctrine is, the more noble the reward propounded; and the more dreadful the punishment threatened, the more inexcusable will be our negligence and disobedience. Whereas, on the other hand, if we so read and meditate upon the oracles of God, contained in the holy Scriptures, as to become still more and more the servants of God, and nearer to heaven, how should we praise God for his goodness and providence in preserving this holy book for our use! that whereas so many thousands in the world are ignorant of God and his word, we should know

him and his heavenly will so far, as would make us here the holy and lively members of his church, and hereafter place us on the right hand, in order to hear that joyful invitation, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Grant to us, O Lord, in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*



APPENDIX:

Containing some Remarks, taken chiefly from modern Travellers of undoubted credit, concerning Palestine, where the Jews lived, and other parts of the Eastern countries, and the present customs of the inhabitants; which illustrate divers passages of the Holy Scriptures.

I. **THERE** are a people in the eastern countries who have no settled abode, but dwell in tents, and remove with their families and beasts for the convenience of grass and water^a; the country lying open without inclosures: "Their whole estate^b consists in the numerous flocks and herds, which they sell upon occasion, to supply themselves with what they want at the towns they pass by. They are courteous to strangers, kindly entertaining them with such provisions as their flocks afford, &c." After such man-

^a The Arabians are divided into two sorts; some of them living in towns and villages; others, having no fixed settled habitations, live in tents, and remove from one part of the country to another, according as their necessities compel, or conveniences incite them. Pocock. Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 2. Compare 2 Maccab. xii. 11, 12. and Just. Hist. l. ii. non longe ab initio. Thevenot's Trav. part ii. b. ii. c. 13. Ray's Collection of Travels, tom. ii. c. v. p. 74. edit. Lond. 1693. Hor. lib. iii. od. 24. *Campestres melius Scythæ (Quorum plaustra vagas rite trahunt domos) Vivunt, et rigidi Getæ, Impetata quibus jugera liberas Fruges et Cererem ferunt.* ^b Dr. Smith apud Ray's Collection of Travels, tom. ii. ch. v. p. 74. edit. Lond. 1693. These are some of the better sort of Arabs; others of them plunder and rob all they meet with. Thevenot, Trav. part i. book ii. ch. 32. Rauwolf apud Ray's Collection of Travels, tom. i. part iii. c. 2. Maundrell's Travels, March 21. p. 56.

ner it seems that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived, and pitched their tents, and had flocks and cattle, &c.^c

II. There are in the same countries, still to be seen, a multitude^d of cells or sepulchres for corpses hewn in the firm rocks; which are, as it were, coffins of stone in niches, in the sides of grotts or chambers, cut in the rocks, according to the ancient manner of burying in those places: several of these cells being eight feet and a half in length, and three feet three inches square. One especially is now to be seen near Jerusalem, consisting of several large rooms with the coffins of stone above mentioned, all cut out of the rocks, supposed to be the sepulchre of the sons of David^e. Hence we read of burying in caves or sepulchres hewn in the rocks^f.

III. It is usual now in the same countries to have a market for slaves^g, where men and women are exposed to sale unto such as have occasion for them. So it was anciently: accordingly we read that Potiphar bought Joseph of the Ishmaelites, to whom his brethren had sold him^h, and there is mention made of servants or slaves *bought with money*ⁱ. And to this custom of buying slaves the Apostle alludes, saying, that we are *bought with a price*, (*viz.* the blood of the Son of God,) and therefore we should duly serve him^k.

IV. The way of travelling for merchants^l and others in the eastern countries is in great companies, to secure themselves against robbers, with a vast

^c Gen. xii. 8. and in divers other places of that book.
^d Maundrell's Travels, March 5, 8, 28. and May 2. Sandys' Trav. i. iii. p. 175. edit. Lond. 1615. ^e 2 Chron. xxxii. 23.

^f Gen. xlix. 29, &c. John xi. 38. Matt. xxvii. 60. ^g Ray's Collection, tom. i. part i. ch. 8. p. 89. and part iii. ch. 10. p. 337.

^h Gen. xxxvii. xxxix. ⁱ Gen. xvii. 23. ^k 1 Cor. vi. 20. See also Matt. xviii. 25. ^l Ray, *ibid.* tom. i. part ii. ch. 10. p. 210. Theyenot, part i. book i. ch. 59.

number of loaden camels and asses, often many hundreds together, which they call caravans. So it seems it was in Jacob's time, when he was in the land of Canaan: *His sons lift up their eyes and looked, and behold a company of Ishmaelites* (a caravan) *came from Gilcad with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt^m.*

V. It is now the custom in those parts (not as with us to thresh, but) to “^a tread out their corn with oxen, drawing a square plank board studded with flints. In some places they only make oxen or horses tread out the corn with their feet^o.” So the Israelites used to do. Hence, ^p *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out* (or thresheth) *the corn.* ^q *Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn.*

VI. Another general custom of the eastern countries is to “send^r a present, in order to procure a favourable reception. It is counted uncivil to visit in this country, without an offering in hand: all great men expect it, as a tribute due to their character and authority; and look upon themselves affronted, and indeed defrauded, when that compliment is omitted.” And in the Mogul's country, it is esteemed “rather a mark of respect on the suppliant's part, than of avarice of the officer's^s.” Thus of old Jacob ordered his sons to carry a present, when they went to Joseph as governor of Egypt^t; and again, ^u *There is not a present to bring the man of God.* And, ^v *the children of Be-*

^m Gen. xxxvii. 25. ^a Dr. Smith apud Ray, *ibid.* tom. ii. ch. v. p. 70. Somewhat like this, Thevenot's Trav. part ii. book i. c. 5. p. 24. ^o Thevenot's Travels, *ibid.* ^p Deut.

xxv. 4. ^q Hos. x. 11. ^r Maundrell's Travels, March 11. p. 26. Tavernier's Relation of Tonquin, ch. 1. p. 2. ^s Manouchy's History of the Moguls, near the end, p. 361. edit. Lond. 1722. ^t Gen. xliii. 11, 26. ^u In 1 Sam. ix. 7.

^v 1 Sam x. 27.

lial despised Saul, and brought him no presents. The wise men that came from the east to adore Christ as King, brought him a present of gold, frankincense, and myrrh⁷.

VII. The houses which are now in Jerusalem, and many other parts of the East, are built low; the top whereof is plain and plaistered, and hath battlements almost a yard high, by the walls surmounting their roofs: for they cover their houses with a flat roof or floor, so that they may walk upon them; and in the day-time they shelter themselves from the sun within the chamber under this plaistered floor, and after sun-set they walk, eat, and sleep upon it^a. So it seems the Jews formerly built, and were commanded to make a battlement for the roof^a. Rahab hid the spies *upon the roof of her house^b*; and *David walked upon the roof of his house^c*. To which Christ alludes, bidding his disciples to preach openly *upon the house-tops*, or in public^d. And *Peter went up upon the house-top to pray^e*.

VIII. The cedars "grow" now amongst the snow, near the highest part of Lebanon, and are remarkable as well for their own age and largeness, as for those frequent allusions made unto them in the word of God. Here are some of them very old, and of a prodigious bulk, and others younger, and of a smaller size: of the former I could only reckon up sixteen, the latter were very numerous. I measured one of the largest, and found it twelve yards

⁷ Matt. ii. 11. See also Gen. xxxii. 13. ¹ Kings x. 2, 10, 25. ² Kings viii. 8. ^a Ray's Collection, tom. i. part i. ch. 2. p. 23. and part iii. ch. 2. p. 283. Morison's Itinerary, part i. book iii. ch. 2. Le Bruyn's Voyage, ch. 38. and 65. and his Draught of Jerusalem, chap. 53. Sandys' Travels, book ii. iii. p. 116, 119, 149. ^a Deut. xxii. 8. ^b Josh. ii. 6, 8. ^c 2 Sam. xi. 2. ^d Matt. x. 27. ^e Acts x. 9. See also 1 Sam. ix. 25. 2 Sam. xvi. 22. Matt. xxiv. 17. Mark ii. 4. ^f Maundrell, *ibid.* May 2. p. 142.

and six inches in girth, and yet sound, and thirty-seven yards in the spread of its boughs." This illustrates the passage where Solomon is said to discourse of trees; *from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall*^h. And, ⁱ*The righteous shall flourish like a cedar in Lebanon.* And, ^k*The boughs thereof were like the goodly cedar-trees*: and many other places in the holy Scripture.

IX. The eastern people at this time do not^l keep their wine in such bottles as we do, but in skins, especially goat skins: in like manner they kept wine^m anciently. To which our Saviour alludes, ⁿ*Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, (or skins,) else the bottles break,* by the fermenting spirits of the new wine bursting the old bottles, or skins.

X. "Men and women, young and old, in the eastern countries, use to make^o a thin paste of galls, and calcined copperas, to beautify themselves, and to keep their eyes from rheums. With it they blacken their lips, and make a ring round about their eyes, in the same manner as our ring-doves have about their necks: these paintings they have had anciently, and some of them they have prepared of stibium or antimony." Of these paintings of the eyes we read in several places; ^p*For whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thine eyes, &c.* and, ^q*Jezebel painted her face*; in Hebrew it is, *put her eyes in painting*: so also, ^r*Though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face,* in Hebrew, *thine eyes, with painting*.

^h 1 Kings iv. 33. ⁱ Psal. xcii. 12. ^k Psal. lxxx. 10.
^l Ray's Collection of Travels, tom. i. part i. ch. viii. p. 94.
Maundrell, *ibid.* March 12. at the end of that day. ^m Homer. *Odyss.* apud Ham. in Matt. ix. 17. ⁿ Matt. ix. 17.
^o Ray, *ibid.* tom. i. part i. ch. 6. p. 81. ^p Ezek. xxiii. 40.
^q 2 Kings ix. 30. ^r Jer. iv. 30.

XI. The present state of some great cities, whose ruin was foretold by the ancient prophets.

1. Nineveh was the ancient seat of the Assyrian monarchs, who captivated the ten tribes; so large, that the passing through it took up three days journey*. "There is nothing of it now[†] to be seen but some hillocks, which the people of that country say are its foundations;" according to the prophecy of Nahum against it", *With an overflowing flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof.*

2. That once famous city of Babylon in Chaldea, which was esteemed the wonder of the world; whose walls, being of a prodigious height, are said to be in compass 480 furlongs, or 60 of our English miles; which the great monarch Nebuchadnezzar made his seat, and because he much enlarged it, boasted, *Is not this great Babylon which I have built?* (who also carried away captive the Jews;) although it may be known where it stood, by its situation, and several ancient and delicate antiquities, which are still standing thereabout in great desolation; is[‡] now, "with its magnificence and glorious buildings, quite desolated, and lieth in the dust; there is not so much as a house to be seen, and it appears as if one were in the middle of a desert; so that every one that passes through it, hath great reason to admire with astonishment how it is now reduced to such a desolation and wilderness; that the very shepherds cannot abide to fix their tents to inhabit it." So strictly are the prophecies verified which we read, " *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; it shall never be in-*

* Jonah iii. 3.

† Thevenot's Travels, part ii. b. i. c. 11.

‡ Chap. i. 8. " Rauwolf apud Ray's Collection of Travels, tom. i. part ii. ch. 7. p. 175, 176. " Isa. xiii. 19, &c.

habited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there. The prophet adds^a, *Wild beasts of the desert shall live there*: and so St. Jerome tells us, that in his time (about the year 400) it was “the king’s hunting place^b” and Benjamin, in his Itinerary, says of the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar’s palace there, that “men dare not enter in for serpents and scorpions which possess the place^c.”

3. Tyre, a wealthy city, and of great trading for merchandize, and as such mentioned by Isaiah^a, *whose merchants were princes, and honourable in the earth^b*, is now a “mere^c Babel of broken walls, pillars, and vaults, there being not so much as one entire house left. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place, by a divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz. *I will make thee like the top of a rock, thou shalt be a place to spread dry nets upon^d*.”

XII. Upon mount Calvary, there is “^e a hole in the natural rock, said to be the very same in which the foot of our Lord’s cross was fixed: at about a yard and a half distant from the hole is seen that memorable cleft in the rock, said to have been made by the earthquake which happened at the suffering of the God of nature; when (as St. Matthew witnesseth) *the rocks rent^f*. This cleft, as to what now appears of it, is about a span wide, at its upper part, and two deep, after which it closes; but it

^a Ver. 21. ^b In Isa. xiii. ult. ^c Benjamin Itiner. p. (mihi) 184. edit. Leyd. 1635. See also Jer. li. 26—30. ^d Isa. xxiii. 8. ^e Ver. 8. ^f Maundrell, March 20, p. 48. ^g Ezek. xxvi. 14. ^h Maundrell, March 26, p. 73, 74. ⁱ Matt. xxvii. 51.

opens again below, and runs down to an unknown depth in the earth. That this rent was made by the earthquake, there is only tradition to prove; but that it is a natural and genuine breach, and not counterfeited by any art, the sense and reason of every one that sees it may convince him; for the sides of it fit like two tallies to each other, and yet it runs into such intricate windings, as could not be well counterfeited by art, not arrived at by any instrument."

XIII. In the countries ^e near Mesopotamia, "the women make dough for cakes, which are about a finger thick, and about the bigness of a trencher, and lay them on hot stones, and keep them a turning; at length they fling ashes and embers over them, and so bake them throughly. They are very good to eat, and very savoury." This seems to explain Sarah's making cakes on the hearth ^h.

XIV. "We were sufficiently instructed by experience ⁱ, what the Psalmist means by *the dew of Hermon*; our tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night." This was spoken of that Hermon near Tabor.

XV. "The water ^k of the sea of Galilee (which is also called the sea of Tiberias, or the lake of Genesareth) hath plenty of fish in it; on what side soever I cast my eye along the shore, I saw a great many fish swim." So it seems it was in Christ's time. Hence we read of Simon Peter, and others, casting their nets, and fishing in the sea of Galilee or Tiberias ^l. To the same purpose Josephus, a Jew, wrote concerning the lake of Genesareth, that "it had in it great variety of fish, which for taste and shape were not to be found any where else ^m."

^e Rauwolf apud Ray's Collection of Travels, tom. i. part ii. chap. ix. p. 201. ^h Gen. xviii. 6. likewise Exod. xii. 39.

ⁱ Kings xvii. 13. and xix. 6. ^l Sam. xiii. 8. Hosea vii. 9.

^k Maundrell, ibid. March 22. ^k Le Bruyn's Voyage, chap. 61.

^l Matt. iv. and John xxi. ^m Joseph. Wars, book iii. chap. 18.

XVI. The rite of *discalceation*, or putting ⁿ off the shoes or sandals, is still used by the eastern people at their coming into sacred places, (like putting off the hat with us.) So do the Jews now, when they enter into their synagogues, (and the Turks at their mosques or temples.) As it was commanded Moses, ° *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*

XVII. The ancient custom still continues in the eastern parts, of employing *eunuchs*^p, or gelded men, in the chiefest offices, as of treasurers, stewards over their goods, cattle, wives, and children, &c. Thus queen Candace's officer of great authority, and chief treasurer, was an eunuch^q.

XVIII. The way of *divination by arrows* was usual among the ancient Arabians^r; as when any person was to undertake an affair of moment, he put three arrows into a vessel, on one of which was written, *My God hath commanded*; on the other, *My God hath forbidden*; and on the third, *Nothing*. If the first were drawn out, the person pursued his design; if the second, he forebore; and if the third, he drew on till one of the former was drawn. This may explain the way of the king of Babylon's divination, when among other methods of it, it is said, *He made his arrows bright*^s.

XIX. When the Turks *salute one another*, they uncover not the head; to do so would be an affront; but only laying their hand upon their breast, and bowing a little, they say, *Sela meon aleicom*^t, which is as much as to say, *Peace be with you*. This was

ⁿ Thevenot's Travels, part i. chap. 37. Mede, book ii. of the reverence of God's house, §. 3. ° Exod. iii. 5. ^p Ray, *ibid.* tom. i. part iii. c. 2. p. 269. Thevenot's Trav. part i. b. i. c. 18. Dampier's Voyages, vol. ii. c. 4. of Tonquin. ^q Acts viii. 27. See what is said of that passage in Acts viii. ^r Pocock's Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 327, &c. et Hieronymus in Ezek. xxi. 21. ^s Ezek. xxi. 21. ^t Thevenot's Travels, part i. book i. chap. 22.

the ancient way of salutation. And the East Indians^a, when they salute each other, uncover not the head, but often throw themselves flat on their faces at each other's feet. Thus in Scripture, they saluted, by *bowing*, and sometimes *to the ground*, to shew the greater respect^x, and wished each other *peace*, (as hath been observed in the first general rule for the interpreting holy Scripture, numb. vii. ;) and not only in civil, but religious worship, the eastern people used prostration, or falling down flat on their faces oft-times when they said their prayers, as the Mahometans do. This explains the words^y, *I fell down before the Lord*^z; and Christ *fell on his face and prayed*^a.

XX. "The religion of the inhabitants of Tonquin^b, in the East Indies, is Paganism, and they are great idolaters; nevertheless they own an omnipotent, supreme, over-ruling power, which beholds both them and their actions; and so far takes notice of them, as to reward the good, and punish the bad, in the other world." This farther confirms what has been said in the seventh general remark on the Pentateuch, concerning the idolatry of the heathen world.

XXI. In the East Indies, and in Africa, men *purchase their wives*^c of their fathers, brothers; or nearest male relations; according to the ninth general remark on the Pentateuch.

XXII. "There are store of *ostriches*^d in the de-

^a Dampier's second volume of his *Voyages*, chap. vii. and vol. i. chap. iv. edit. 4. A Moskito Indian seeing his brother, a Moskito man, threw himself flat on his face at his feet, who helping him up, and embracing him, fell flat with his face on the ground at the other's feet, and was by him taken up also.

^x Gen. xxxiii. 3, 6, 7. ^y Dent. ix. 18. ^z So Job i. 20.

Dan. iii. 7. Matt. ii. 11. ^a Matt. xxvi. 39. ^b Dampier's

Voyages, vol. ii. chap. 3. ^c Dampier, *ibid.* vol. ii. chap. 8. and near the end of the second volume of Natal in Afric.

^d Sandys' *Travels*, book ii. of the Arabians, near the end, page 139.

sarts of Arabia; they are the simplest of fowls, and symbols of folly: when they have laid their eggs, they leave them, and unmindful where, sit on those they meet with." This explains the words of Job*, where it is said of the ostrich, *which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them; she is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers; because God hath deprived her of wisdom, &c.* Hence some have fancied, that the ostrich is hatched only by the hot sand; whereas, however the eggs are left and warmed therein, and are forgotten by the proper female; yet they are hatched by incubation, or sitting on them, (as Mr. Sandys found,) though not always by the same female that laid them, she often forgetting where they are; and if they are not sat on by one or other hen ostrich, they are spoiled, instead of hatched^f by the sun or sand.

XXIII. There are divers opinions and doctrines observed by travellers to be amongst the modern Jews, agreeable to those of their forefathers; which confirm and explain some passages of the New Testament. As,

1st, That of their continued expectancy of a triumphant Messiah^g, whose "appearance they believe shall be warlike, and that he shall lead all their enemies captives, and triumph in the spoils of Esau (*i. e.* all the Gentile world.) They imagine there shall be a general surrender of the Edomites, (that is, Gentiles,) who shall submit themselves to his rod; when all Edom, that is, all mankind who are not of their religion, shall become their hewers of wood, and drawers of water." This was the common notion amongst them in our Saviour's time; who, in oppo-

* Chap. xxxix. 14, &c. ^f Sandys, *ibid.* Compare Bochart de Animal. apud Pool's Synopsis in Job xxxix. 14, 15, 16.

^g Addison's Present State of the Jews, chap. 1.

sition thereto, declared, that his *kingdom was not of this world*. However, this mistake of theirs occasioned their being offended at him, and not owning him for the true Messiah, as hath been observed in the second general remark on the holy Gospels.

2dly, "There are none to be met with among them (the Jews) who adhere to the Old Bible without Talmud traditions^b." In this they imitate their forefathers, whom Christ reproves for their *traditions*ⁱ.

3dly, Though the Bible be not denied the people's reading among the Jews, yet the giving the sense thereof belongs only to the masters or rabbies; "in^k whose interpretation of the text, the vulgar, upon pain of excommunication, are bound to acquiesce." And so their present masters usurp the authority over their faith, as their old rabbies were wont to do in Christ's time; who charged his followers not to be called *rabbi, father, or master*^l.

4thly, "All hope and promise of future reward is confined to themselves, (the Jews,) and to those who are not of their religion, they allow nothing but a total perdition of their being^m." Thus in the first publishing the Gospel, the converted Jews, and even the apostles themselves at first, could not believe that God should *grant to the Gentiles repentance unto salvation*ⁿ.

5thly, The modern Jews take especial care, that they neither touch bread, or any thing that is eatable, a book, or any holy thing, before they "wash their hands and feet^o." So that they still continue to observe the traditions, which Christ rebuked them for^p.

^b Addison, *ibid*. ⁱ Matt. xv. For which see the third general remark on the holy Gospels. ^k Addison's Present State of the Jews, chap. 2. ^l Matt. xxiii. See the tenth general remark on the Gospels, number i. ^m Addison's State, &c. chap. 3. ⁿ See above on the Acts of the Apostles. ^o Leo Modena, part i. chap. 7. ^p See the third general remark on the holy Gospels, num. iii.

A

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,

ACCORDING TO

Archbishop Usher's Annals, and the Epitome thereof in the Index of our larger English Bibles, and Mr. Echard's Tables; wherein the computation is according to the Vulgar Æra, or Account, which commences Anno Mundi 4004.

-
- 1656 **T**HE flood, sixteen hundred and fifty-six years after the beginning of the world.
- 1771 The Assyrian monarchy founded by Nimrod.
- 2083 Abraham's call and journey to Canaan, from his own country Mesopotamia; four hundred and twenty-seven years after the flood.
- 2298 Jacob with his family goes down into Egypt, where they and their posterity lived comfortably one hundred and twenty-nine years.
- 2427 The beginning of the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt.
- 2513 The Israelites delivered out of the Egyptian bondage and slavery, after their being under it fourscore and six years, and two hundred and fifteen years after Jacob's going down into Egypt.
- 2553 They go over Jordan into the promised land of Canaan, forty years after their deliverance out of Egypt.
- 2599 The Judges, who continued a little above three hundred years.
- 2909 The Kings, of which the first was Saul, then David, and next Solomon.
- 3000 The temple of Solomon, or the first temple, finished (after he had been seven years in building it) four hundred and forty-seven years after their entrance into Canaan, and one thousand and five years before Christ.
- 3029 The division of the kingdom into Judah and Israel, four hundred and seventy-six years after their entrance into Canaan.

*Affairs of the Assyrians.**Affairs of Israel and Judah.*

3257 A conspiracy being entered into against Sardanapalus, the last of the old Assyrian monarchs, the monarchy is divided between Arbaces, (called Tiglathpileser, 2 Kings xv. 29.) who resided at Nineveh, and was esteemed king of Assyria; and Belesis, (called Baladan, 2 Kings xx. 12.) who resided at Babylon, and was king thereof, and of the country round about, called Babylonia, or Chaldea.

3276 Salmaneser succeeds Tiglathpileser as king of Assyria, and resides at Nineveh.

3289 Sennacherib succeeds Salmaneser as king of Assyria, and resides at Nineveh.

3294 Esarhaddon succeeds in the kingdom of Assyria.

3323 He reunites Babylon in Chaldea (which had been seized on by Belesis and his successors) to the Assyrian monarchy.

3378 Nabopolassar being a Babylonian, and commander under the king of Assyria and Chaldea, with some aid, assaults and overthrows Nineveh, the ancient royal seat, (according to the prophecy of Nahum,) and makes himself king of Babylon in Chaldea, and also chief of the Assyrian monarchy. So he is termed king of Assyria, 2 Kings xxiii. 29.

3283 The captivity of the kingdom of Israel by Salmaneser, king of Assyria, seven hundred and thirty years after their entrance into Canaan, and two hundred and fifty-four years after the division.

Affairs of Babylon.

- 3394 Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, marches with a great army towards Euphrates, in order to give a check to the Babylonians.

Necho succeeds in his expedition against the Babylonians near Euphrates; and makes all Syria, with the country of the Jews, subject to him.

- 3397 Nabopolassar, king of Babylon and Assyria, about a year before his death, takes his son Nebuchadnezzar partner in his kingdom, and sends him with an army first against the Egyptians at Euphrates, whom he subdued; and then against the Jews, who had become subject to Necho, on his success against the Babylonians.

- 3398 Nebuchadnezzar marches against Jerusalem, and makes it subject to him, and orders many youths of the best quality to be sent away to Babylon, Dan. i. 3. together with great treasures out of the king's palace and the temple.

- 3404 Nebuchadnezzar, being (on notice of the death of his father) returned to Babylon, sends another army against Jehoiakim, king of Judah, who had rebelled against him.

Affairs of Judah.

- 3394 Josiah, king of Judah, designing to stop Necho, king of Egypt, in his march against the Babylonians, is slain at Megiddo; and Jehoahaz his son, whom the people had made king, is deposed by Necho on his return homewards; who sets up Eliakim, another son of Josiah, in his stead, and changes his name to Jehoiakim, 2 Kings xxiii. 30, &c. but carries Jehoahaz into Egypt, where he died.

- 3397 The time approaching for the destruction and captivity of the kingdom of Judah, God sends Jeremiah the prophet to forewarn them of it, and if possible to reclaim them, Jer. xxv. 3, &c. but all in vain.

- 3398 Jehoiakim is become tributary to the Babylonians; and the captivity of the kingdom of Judah is begun by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. From whence the seventy years of their captivity are reckoned; one hundred and fifteen years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by Salmaneser. Daniel, being carried among the captives, was preferred in Nebuchadnezzar's court, for interpreting his dream.

Affairs of Babylon.

Jehoiakim is slain, and the kingdom laid waste, and his son Jehoiachin made king.

- 3405** Nebuchadnezzar again comes against Jerusalem, takes king Jehoiachin and many others captive, and sends them to Babylon, and makes Zedekiah king of Judah.

- 3416** Upon Zedekiah's revolt, Nebuchadnezzar comes once more against Jerusalem, and takes it, puts out Zedekiah's eyes, and carries him and many others captive to Babylon.

Affairs of Judah.

- 3416** Jerusalem and the first temple burnt, and the Babylonian captivity finished, (in 18 years from the beginning of it,) eight hundred and sixty-three years after their entrance into Canaan, four hundred and sixteen years after the temple had been built, and five hundred and eighty-eight years before Christ.

Affairs of Babylon.

- 3435** Nebuchadnezzar for his pride is distracted, and driven among beasts.

- 3442** After seven years he recovers, acknowledges the Divine power, and is restored to his kingdom; but soon after dies.

- 3442** Evil-Merodach, his son, succeeds in the kingdom.

- 3444** Neriglissar, Evil-Merodach's sister's husband, slays him, and succeeds. This Neriglissar, being jealous of the united forces of the Medes and Persians, designed a war against them; which, about twenty years after he began it, ended with the ruin of the Babylonian monarchy, and occasioned

Affairs of the Jews.

The Jews remain captives in Babylon.

Jehoiachin, or Jecooniah, being a captive in Babylon, has favour shewn him after thirty-seven years imprisonment there, Jer. lii. 31, &c.

Affairs of Babylon.

Affairs of the Jews.

the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.

3445 Cyrus son of Cambyses, king of Persia, and nephew to Cyaxares, king of Media, is chosen general of the army of the Medes and Persians ; by whom Neriglissor, king of Babylon, is slain in battle ; and his son

3448 Laborosoarchad (who was also grandson to Nebuchadnezzar, on his daughter's side) succeeds : he is slain by some of his own people.

3449 Nabonidus, called in Scripture Belshazzar, son of Evil-Merodach, (and so another grandson to Nebuchadnezzar, on his son's side ; in which respect Nebuchadnezzar, according to the Scripture style, is called his *father*, that is, ancestor, Dan. v. 2.) succeeds in the kingdom of Babylon, and was the last king thereof.

3465 Cyrus, having routed the Babylonian army, besieges the city of Babylon.

3466 Belshazzar's feast, and the hand-writing on the wall denouncing the end of his reign, and his kingdom being given to the Medes and Persians.

Belshazzar is slain. With him ended the monarchy of the Assyrians or Chaldeans ; and Cyrus having taken the city of Babylon, founded the Persian monarchy ; but for the present left the government to his uncle Cyaxares, who was king of Media, and called in Scripture,

Darius the Median, Dan. v. 31. Hence the government was styled that of the Medes and Persians.

Daniel is preferred in Belshazzar's court, Daniel v.

Darius's decree against making any petition for 30 days, but to himself, occasions Daniel's being cast into the lion's den, Dan. vi.

Affairs of Babylon.

3467

Darius the Median governed the affairs of the empire of Babylon for two years, and then died.

Affairs of the Jews.

Daniel having considered the 70 years captivity (foretold by Jeremiah, ch. xxix. 10.) as now expiring, prays for the deliverance of the people. God sends the angel Gabriel to confirm his hopes, and also to foretell to him the Messiah, the spiritual Redeemer of his church, after seventy weeks of years, or seventy times seven, that is, four hundred and ninety years, Dan. ix.

Note, That from Cyrus's extinguishing of the Babylonian monarchy, and beginning the Persian, the Jews in their own country were governed by the high-priest and Sanhedrim, or great council; but under subjection to the Persian monarchy, for about two hundred and eight years, till Alexander's conquest of the Persians.

Affairs of the Persians.

3468 Cyrus had now the possession of the whole eastern empire, by the death of his father Cambyses, king of Persia, and his uncle Darius, king of Media; and so he became the first monarch, himself dying seven years afterwards.

Affairs of the Jews.

The seventy years captivity are expired:—
And

Cyrus releases the Jews, five hundred and thirty-six years before Christ.

3469 The Jews set up the altar for the offering of their sacrifices to God; and lay the foundation of the second temple, in the second year after their return, Ezra iii.

3470 But the Samaritans, being not accepted as helpers in the building, maliciously bribed some of Cyrus's courtiers, and hindered it all his reign, Ezra iv. 5.

3475 Cambyses the Second, his eldest son, succeeds; but by his extravagant

3475 Cambyses the Second is supposed to be that Ahasuerus, in Ezra iv.

Affairs of the Persians.

behaviour, gave an opportunity to one of the
 3483 Persian Magi, (or Smerdi) called Artaxerxes in Ezra iv. 7, 16, to usurp the government: against whom seven of the Persian princes conspire, and slew him; and hearing that Cambyses also was dead, they set up

3483 Darius, one of their number, surnamed Hystaspes, (because one Hystaspes was his father,) to succeed in the government.

3489

3519 Xerxes succeeds his father Darius, as likewise the following Persian kings were each of them the sons of their parents, who reigned before them, except the last mentioned, who was of the royal seed, though not by immediate descent.

3531 Artaxerxes succeeds, surnamed Longimanus, by reason of the length of his hands. He was very favourable to the

Affairs of the Jews.

6, whom the Samaritans solicited to discourage the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem.

3483 Artaxerxes also forbade the Jews to build, on the spiteful suggestion of the Samaritans, Ezra iv. 7, 16.

3484 Under Darius, in his second year, by the incitement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the building of the temple goes on, Ezra v. 6.

— The second temple finished on the sixth year of Darius, and dedicated with great joy, Ezra vi. about 20 years after the foundation thereof was laid under Cyrus, and five hundred and fifteen years before Christ.

3537 Ezra a priest, and learned in the law of Moses, obtains a commission from Artaxerxes to set

Affairs of the Persians.

Jews; and is supposed to be that Ahasuerus who married Esther, by whom the Jews were preserved from the destruction contrived by Haman; Esther ii, &c.

3581 Darius Nothus, whose proper name was Ochus, succeeded in the empire.

3600 Artaxerxes Mnemon, so called by reason of his great memory.

3644 Ochus, called also Artaxerxes.

3666 Arogus, or Arses.

3668 Darius, whose right name was Codomannus, who was afterwards conquered by Alexander the Great.

3674 Alexander the Great, having conquered the Persians, founded the Macedonian or Grecian empire.

Affairs of the Jews.

in order the commonwealth of the Jews, and to reform the church at Jerusalem, Ezra vii. sixty-nine years after their return from captivity.

3550 Nehemiah also, a religious Jew, but preferred to be cup-bearer to Artaxerxes; procures a commission from him, to finish the building of the walls of Jerusalem, and farther to reform and settle the Jewish church and state; four-score and two years after the return from the Babylonian captivity, Nehem. i. &c.

3672 The Jews in subjection to Alexander the Great, whilst he was in those parts of the world, pursuing his conquest of the Persians, two hundred and four years after their return from the Babylonian capti-

Affairs of the Persians.

- 3681 Alexander the Great died at Babylon, seven years after his conquest over the Persians.
-

Affairs of the Jews.

vity, into their own country ; and three hundred and thirty-two years before Christ.

The building of the anti-temple on mount Gerizim in Samaria, with Alexander's leave, according to Usher, occasioned a great schism in the Jewish church. [But Dean Prideaux places it above seventy years before this, under Darius Nothus.]

Affairs of the Egyptians and Syrians.

- 3684 After Alexander's death his generals seizing on the several parts of his empire, Ptolemy Soter, who had gotten Egypt, made himself master of Judea.

- 3806 Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, prevailing in his wars against the Egyptians, the Jews rendered themselves to him.

- 3834 They are grievously oppressed by Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria ; three hundred and sixty-six years after their return from the Babylonian captivity ; and one hundred and seventy years before Christ.

- 3838 The Maccabees (descended from one of their priestly families) their deliverers ; one hundred and sixty-six years before Christ.

[Note, That they were governed by the same family of the Maccabees successively, till their subjection to the Romans.]

Affairs of the Jews.

- 3684 The Jews in subjection to the kings of Egypt, about three hundred and twenty years before Christ.

- 3806 The Jews one hundred and twenty years afterwards become subject to the Syrians.

3941 The Jews brought under subjection to the Romans by Pompey, one of the Roman generals, (after having been governed by their own countrymen, the Maccabees, somewhat above one hundred years,) sixty-three years before Christ.

3964 Herod the Great (an Idumean, but of the Jewish religion) declared by the Romans the king of the Jews, forty years before the birth of Christ.

3966 Herod, about two or three years after he was declared king of Judea, with the assistance of Socius, the Roman general, besieged and took Jerusalem with a very great slaughter of the Jews; and Antigonus, the last reigning prince of the Maccabees, being beheaded, Herod became fully established in the kingdom of Judea.

3996 The temple of Jerusalem, having been much decayed, was, in nine years and a half, repaired, or rather rebuilt, by Herod, and finished eight years before Christ.

4000 } Jesus Christ our Lord born in the world.
4004 }

Herod the Great died about a year and a quarter after Christ's nativity. His dominions were divided among three of his sons: of which Archelaus had Judea and Samaria; and Herod Antipas, Galilee; Philip had Trachonitis, and other countries beyond Jordan, north-eastward.

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

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| Roman Emperors. | Years of Christ. | Judea and Samaria. | Galilee. | Affairs of Christianity. |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Augustus. 40 | 6 | Archelaus governed Judea and Samaria. Archelaus is banished; and his dominions being made a province subject to that of Syria, governors are sent by the Romans into Judea. The fifth of which was | Herod Antipas governed Galilee; and continued in that station till sometime after Christ's death: he is called in Scripture, Herod the Tetrarch, Matthew xiv. 1. but most commonly Herod. | |
| Tiberius. | 12 | | | Our Lord at 12 years of age at Jerusalem among the doctors. |
| | 14 | Pontius Pilate. | | Joseph, husband to the Virgin Mary, dies. |
| | 26 | | | John Baptist begins to preach. |
| | 28 | | | This period St. Mark calls, <i>The beginning of the Gospel.</i> |
| | 29 | | | Our Lord is baptized, and enters upon his public ministry, and works miracles in Galilee; and at the first passover after his baptism goes to Jerusalem, and also into other parts of Judea and Samaria. |
| | 30 | | | Christ's second passover after his baptism. He more and more manifests |
| | 31 | | | |

| Roman Emperors. | Years of Christ. | Judea and Samaria. | Galilee. | Affairs of Christianity. |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Caligula. | | | | himself by preaching, and working miracles. |
| | 32 | | | Christ's third passover after his baptism. |
| | 33 | | | John Baptist beheaded. |
| | | | | Christ's fourth and last passover. He is crucified, arises again, and ascends up into heaven. |
| | | | | The Holy Ghost is sent down. |
| | 34 | | | The first establishment of the Christian church. |
| | | | | St. Stephen stoned, and the church persecuted. |
| | 35 | | | St. Paul converted as he was going to Damascus. |
| | 36 | Pilate deprived of his government and Marcellus in his room. | | |
| | 37 | | | |
| | 38 | | Herod Antipas, or the Tetrarch, is banished: his government is bestowed on Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great. | |
| Claudius. | | Judea, Samaria, Galilee. | | |
| | 40 | | | The Gentiles owned to have an interest in Christ, |
| | 41 | Herod Agrippa is confirmed in his government of Galilee, by the emperor | | in a vision to Peter. Cornelius converted. |

| Roman Emperors. | Years of Christ. | Judea, Samaria, Galilee. | Affairs of Christianity. |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | Claudius, who also added Judea and Samaria to his kingdom; so he is called Herod the king, Acts xii. as being now king of all Palestine, or the Jewish country. | |
| | 44 | Herod Agrippa is smitten by an angel, and dies miserably; upon which the Roman emperor again sends governors into Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. | Herod Agrippa persecutes the church. St. James the Great beheaded by his command; but Peter delivered. |
| | | Cuspius Fadus, governor. | The persecution ceases, and the Christian church flourishes. |
| | 45 | | The apostles disperse themselves to preach the Gospel in several parts of the world. |
| | 46 | Tiberius Alexander, governor. | Paul and Barnabas being chosen, at Antioch in Syria, the apostles of the Gentiles, begin their circuit, and preach at Cyprus, and in the Lesser Asia. |
| | 47 | | They return to Antioch, and give an account of their success. |
| | 48 | Cumanus, governor. | |
| | 49 | | They go to Jerusalem to the council. |
| | 51 | | Paul being separated from Barnabas, travels into Europe, and plants the Gospel in Greece, chiefly at Thessalonica and Corinth. |
| | 53 | Fœlix, governor. | |
| | | Agrippa, the younger, son to Herod Agrippa above mentioned, obtains | |

| Roman Emperors. | Years of Christ. | Judea, Samaria, Galilee. | Affairs of Christianity. |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nero. | | the dominions formerly belonging to Philip, and other countries lying north-eastward of Galilee and Jordan. To which afterwards was added some part of Galilee. He is called King Agrippa, Acts xxv. | |
| | 54 | | St. Paul settles a church at Ephesus. |
| | 58 | | He goes the last time to Jerusalem, and is arraigned before Felix, who detained him prisoner two years at Cæsarea, the residence of the Roman governors. |
| | 60 | Festus, governor. | St. Paul before Festus and king Agrippa at Cæsarea. |
| | 61 | Judea and Samaria. | Galilee. |
| | 62 | Albinus, governor. | St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. |
| | 63 | | [Here ends the history of the Acts of the Apostles.] |
| | 64 | Florus, governor. | St. Paul is released, and travels up and down planting the Gospel in the western parts. |
| | 66 | The Jewish war breaks out, which at length proved their ruin. | The first general persecution under Nero. |
| | 67 | | St. Paul at his second coming to Rome is ap- |

| Roman Emperors. | Years of Christ. | Judea and Samaria. | Galilee. | Affairs of Christianity. |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| | | | | prehended with St. Peter. |
| Galba. | 68 | | | St. Peter and St. Paul |
| Otho. | 69 | | | both martyred at Rome. |
| Vitellius | | | | |
| Vespasian. | 70 | The daily sacrifice ceases, Jerusalem is taken, and burnt by the Roman army, whereby an end is put to the Jewish state, a little above fifteen hundred years after their first settlement in Canaan, six hundred and two years after their return from the Babylonian captivity, and thirty-seven years after Christ's crucifixion. | | |

It may be proper, for the use of some readers, to signify the state and office, in the Christian church of the few primitive Fathers herein quoted, and the time when they flourished; and for the ease of others, the editions made use of.

Years of Christ.

- 100 **IGNATIUS**, bishop of Antioch in Syria. Englished by Archbishop Wake. Compared with the Greek of Vossius. Edit. 2. London. 1680.
- 140 **JUSTIN MARTYR**, a Christian Apologist. Apol. 1. Grabe. Oxon. 1700. Trypho. Jebb. Lond. 1719.
- 179 **IRENÆUS**, Bishop of Lyons in France. Grabe. Oxon. 1702.
- 192 **TERTULLIAN**, Presbyter at Carthage in Africa. Rigaltii, Paris, 1634.
- 398 **CHRYSOSTOM**, Bishop of Constantinople. Latin, Antwerp, 1614, compared with the Savilian edition.
- 400 **JEROME**, Presbyter. Much conversant in Palestine, or in the Holy Land. Erasmus. Paris, 1534.
- 400 **AUGUSTIN**, Bishop of Hippo in Africa. Basil. 1543.



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